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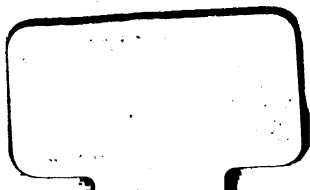
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THE FLOWER ON LOVE'S GRAVE:

A Poem.



BY

WOODHILL BRANCH.

"THE COURSE OF TRUE LOVE NEVER DID RUN SMOOTHER."

Shakespeare.

London:

G. J. STEVENSON, 54, PATERNOSTER ROW.

—
1870.

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My limbs at ease, by some white-blossomed thorn
Or solitary shade of mountain ash,
To watch the passing clouds, whose rosy dyes
Grow fainter as the purple twilight fades.

Mine is a life of peace. Three miles or more
Of broken track, in some parts covered quite
By the encroaching furze bush, lie between
Our cottage and the village. There at night
The ploughmen and mechanics gather round
The ale-bench, to discuss "the latest news;"
Sad tales we hear, that oft their noisy mirth
Turns into quarrelling, and, at times, even ends
In blows and kicks and bruises. Glad am I
That fate has cast my lot beyond the reach
Of all their broils, to tend the quiet sheep—
Harmless myself and innocent as they.

In yonder lowly cottage thatched with straw,
Whence curling wreaths of smoke ascend, these eyes
First opened to behold the light of day.
In those sweet fields, whose lovely hue of green
Looks fresh and bright in contrast with the moor
Around, in childhood's earliest years I learned
To love the freshness of the mountain breeze;
And twenty years, which I have spent amid
The still recesses of these ancient hills,
Have, in my heart, a strong affection bred
For lonely quietude, which hopes to rise
Above my present lot can never change.

Though humble be my home, though its rough walls
Of unhewn stone, collected on the moor,
No architectural beauty boast ; though green
And rustic be the door, on which have beat
The countless storms of many hundred years ;
Though paperless the walls and mud the floor,—
Still I prefer it to the stately halls
Which glittering shine in modern splendour bright.
Though the old oaken cupboards found within
Contain no golden wealth, nor title-deeds
To me securing right of house or lands,
Yet, in that cot, from day to day I find
A treasure which I value higher far,—
Comfort,—which oft forsakes the palaces
Of kings, nor nestles in the lordly halls,
Where wealth and beauty shine,—retires and hides
Her presence, so much coveted, with me,
And, smiling, bids me rest and be content.

The rich and noble decorate their high
And spacious dwellings with rich ornaments,
Shining with glittering gold or precious stones :
Here copies hang of nature's fairest scenes,
Encased in richly-ornamented frames ;
There stand the busts of noblest specimens
Of man, or images of ancient gods
In sculptured marble ; yet I envy not,
For decorations, free of charge, are brought
By nature to our very doors. The rich
And varied tints of the wild flowers exceed

The best productions of the skill of man ;
The sparkling landscape, when the light of morn
Gilds the brown hill-tops, and transparent air
With its first rosy hues, as far transcends
The artist's choicest efforts, as the sun
Exceeds the faint rays of the dimmest star.

Beneath a load of costly dainties bend
The tables of the rich. From foreign shores
Their luxuries are imported—sparkling wine
And fruits, which ask a warmer clime than ours
To bring them to perfection. Every meal
Of theirs exceeds what I should think a feast ;
But, though my humble lot denies to me
Indulgences like these, I'll not repine
While the brown loaf, with moorland honey spread,
And bowl of fragrant milk for me remain,
Or even the oatmeal porridge plainer still.
Nature requires no more for her support,
And these give health and vigour to the frame,
To every muscle elasticity ;
While the clear waters of the crystal spring,
Cloudless and bright, preserve the fount of thought,—
Nature's pure beverage, undefiled by man.

'Tis wonderful how few appreciate
The pure enjoyments nature doth provide
For all who will accept them ; strange to see
Man seeking pleasure from his own device,
Which ne'er can satisfy, while nature's hand
So freely proffers what he seeks in vain !

Seeks he for beauty ? Let him turn his eye
On the flower-spotted robe of green, which Spring
Throws yearly o'er the fields. No art of man
E'er formed so fair a fabric. Let him take
Flower, leaf or bud, and, with inquiring eye,
Examine well its parts : the graceful shape,
The colours blended with such harmony,
The veins so finely ramified, to give
To every part its due supply of sap ;
Then let him own that nature has prepared
For all a store of beauty, fair as gems
From India's richest mines. Does he desire
Rich tones of melody to drive away
The mists of care, which gather round the soul,
As thickening fogs in Autumn veil the hills,
And hide them from the sun ? Let him give heed
To nature's universal harp, the wind,
When it breathes soft, a lulling note, through boughs
Of quivering pine, or when, with louder swell,
It bends the oaks, and, hoarsely roaring, sweeps
The grey old rocks that guard the mountain-side,
And be convinced that neither swelling strain
From organ pipe, nor chanting choir below,
Can melt the soul to raptures so profound
As those we feel when nature's chorus swells.

The highest earthly wish that I indulge
Is that I ever thus may dwell in peace,
Beyond the reach of strife. Here I can muse
In quiet, or, in humble garb attired,

Recline by lonely brook to hold converse,
By books, with kindred spirits far away ;
Or, when by solitude and stillness nursed,
Ideas awake, to shape them into words,
While my flocks whiten the surrounding waste.

A red flag waving on the rocky peak !
Sir Arthur has arrived ! His eldest son
To-morrow will be twenty-one. A feast
Will be prepared by yonder tapering pole,
Which marks the summit of his wide domain
Of purple heath, dark woods and smiling meads.
The moorland shepherds and the farmers near
Are all expected to attend, and bring
Their families, in holiday attire,
To join in rural games and rustic mirth
In honour of their landlord's eldest son.
Unused to company, far rather I
Would take my lonely rounds among the sheep,
But then I should be missed. Sir Arthur's kind,
A good kind landlord, who, 'tis said, holds dear
The welfare of his tenants, and delights
To see them happy. I will force myself,
And not appear ungrateful. Peace, my heart,
Beat not so rapidly. To-morrow's sun
Will course the heavens with quite as swift a wheel
As he performs on other days. The hand
Which points the hour will lag not as it turns,
Till evening separates the guests, and brings
The welcome hour of parting and of rest.

INTERLUDE.

On heather-blooming hills,
By silver-glancing rills,
Where wild birds wheel around the rocky height,
I lead a quiet life,
Beyond the reach of strife,
Lonely as flowers which in the waste delight.

When the first rosy gleam
Of early morning's beam
Sparkles in dewdrops on each crimson bell,
Free as the lark, which sings
Aloft on fluttering wings,
I trace the breezy height or silent dell.

When purple twilight fades
Into night's darker shades,
And the grouse nestle in their ferny bower,
While night-winds whisper low,
Homewards again I go,
To rest in peace at the accustomed hour.

In the recesses sweet
Of this secure retreat,
Where peace for ever broods on downy wing,
May I aye lead my life
Beyond the reach of strife,
And changing years no wish for changing bring.

II.—A SUNBEAM ON THE MOUNTAIN.

SOBBING night-breezes gently move the flowers
Of heather, on which drops of dew distil,
And breathe through fern leaves, murmuring soft and
 low,
As if the spirit of repose passed by,
Hushing the world to silence and to sleep.

The golden sun, which stays not in his course,
Wrapping his head in folds of crimson cloud,
Went slowly down the western steep of heaven,
And hid at last behind the purple hill.
Upon the rocky peak, which lifts its head
Above the circling moorlands clustering round,
The twinkling star of evening looks, and sees
Its summit solitary once again.
The shouts of laughter, the prolonged hurrahs
Have ceased ; the sheep, as is their wont, ascend
To rest in quiet on its ferny crown.

Why throbs my forehead ? Why are all my limbs
So hot and tired ? Had I been all the day
Wandering knee-deep in heather without rest,
Scarce less fatigue had weighed my body down.
This mossy bank is cool and soft and green,
And it shall be my couch, while I stretch out
My limbs to rest awhile, before I turn
Homeward my steps, and seek my humble cot.

That pale, sweet face, lit up with sunny smiles,
Still haunts me. Since, this afternoon, I saw
Those bright, dark eyes, their influence has seemed
To rule my other thoughts, and given a shade
Of melancholy, sad, yet soft and sweet,
To everything I look upon. Even now,
When I would close mine eyes and muse awhile
In quietude, by that clear inward vision
With which we view all objects painted down
By memory in the soul, I see again
The graceful outline of her lovely form,—
The dark curls clustering round her fair white neck;
Her cheeks, just tinted with the rose; her lips
Gently apart, and breaking into smiles;
Her swelling breast, rich without ornament;
And sweeter still than all, her looks of love
Expressive, not to be described in words,
Deep in my heart I see. Upon the peak,
Amid the rosy beauties of these hills,
She looked like some fair snowdrop, on a bank
Of parti-coloured flowers, meek, pure, and pale;
Pure as the lily, gentle as the dove,
And sweet as opening rose-buds. Little dreamt
My heart last night that in the world there dwelt
So fair a form. Still less that fate designed
That I, to-day, that angel-form should see.

'Tis strange, I more than once observed her eye
Resting on mine, but from my look withdrawn;
Yet when I tried to steal another view,

Their beaming orbs were bent upon me still.
And stranger still, the feelings they awoke
Within my heart. I've often seen the stars
Look through an opening in the clouds of night,
And gazed until I thought them angel eyes,
And felt my spirit stir. Upon the moon,
Pensive and pale, in heaven's high arch, I've looked,
Till a sweet sadness o'er my senses stole.
But this new sympathy which moves my heart,
Although a feeling much akin to those
Is deeper, lovelier, richer, sweeter far.

But why allow myself these idle dreams ?—
I, a poor, simple shepherd—she may be,
For aught I know, the daughter of a squire.
Perhaps her head now gently sinks to rest
Within some stately mansion, while for me
Remains the straw-thatched cottage, mean and poor.

Why did I not inquire her name ? for some
Were there who seemed to know her. 'Twas my heart,
My fluttering heart that failed ; for when I turned
With open lips to ask, within my breast
I felt its heavy beating. O'er my cheek
A burning blush of livid purple spread,
My thoughts grew faint and dim, my tongue refused
To act while the machinery within
Was in disorder ; so I left unasked
The question, and, perchance, so doing, lost
The only opportunity which fate

May place within my reach to find her out.
Oh, faint, unworthy heart ! why dost thou burn
With passion's flame, and yet supply no spark
Of bravery to support thine honest claims ?
Brave thou hast been when threatening dangers
frowned,
In bygone years. Why didst thou fail to-day ?
In such an easy task, why didst thou fail ?

But I'll forget her. On these hills there dwell
Fair maids, whose cheeks eternal blushes wear,
Deep as those roses which are growing wild,
Close by the woodland's edge. Can they not love
With hearts as true ? In memory only she
Shall find a place. Her lovely face shall smile
As smiles an angel, which has visited
My fancy in a dream—down in my heart
Shall smile, yet wake up no vain passion there.

Forget her ! is it possible ? Even now,
When I would banish from my heart the thought,
I see her image still ; mine eyes again
Behold that lovely, gentle, pensive smile.
More lustrous and more lovely seems to shine
The light from those dear eyes, and quite illumine
My sad soul in this deep and thickening gloom.
Like that small azure flower which grows in woods,
And loves the shade of solitary dells,
Whose soft blue eyes look up with mute appeals
Of silent eloquence to all who pass.

Here, in the thickening shadows of the night,
And deep, unbroken silence of these hills,
Looks up that pale and pensive face, within
My heart, and mutely says, "Forget me not."

Selina ! Yes, I think that was the name
I chanced to hear some one address her by.
Selina ! I will put it down, while still
It slips not from my memory, for as yet
It is my only clue to find her out.
But the night deepens, and yon lustrous star
Which disappears behind the dark hill top,
Reminds me it is time to seek repose.

INTERLUDE.

Thou breeze of night,
Whose cooling breath so softly fans my cheek
And throbbing forehead, would that thou couldst speak :
Where sleeps my love to-night ?
Speak, speak,
Oh breeze of night !

Thou star on high,
Looking on everything afar and near,—
Perchance now shining on her bed, say where
She nestles. Is it nigh
Or far ?
Oh star on high !

Visions of sleep,
Ye often visit me, bring back to-night
My love, in her own matchless beauty bright,
And long before me keep
That sight,
Oh dreams of sleep !

Spirit of love,
Descending with the beams, which planets shed
On woody vale and heath-clad mountain head,
My guiding angel prove,
And lead
Me to my love.

III.—THE LOVER'S DREAM.

THE sun's first rosy beams steal softly through
The crimson window curtains of the morn,
And, from my casement, under eaves of thatch,
Stream on the broken flower and lime-washed wall ;
The piping thrush and blackbird warbling wild
Call me again the suckling lambs to tend.

Oh, would that morn had never broken more !
That sleep, which nightly seals mine eyelids up,
Had made them fast and kept them shut for ever !
Walking the shadowy land of dreams, I thought
I saw her graceful image once again,—

Her pure, pale face, with love's own radiance bright,
And beaming eyes as rich as heavenly gems.
Bewitching maiden ! love has placed thy form
In my heart's inmost palace on a throne,—
Queen of my soul, for ever there to reign.

A night of dreamy slumber I have passed,
Dream melting into dream, each different
From all the rest ; but, as in melody,
Warbled on Highland pipe, one leading phrase
Governs the rest, and gives a character
Cheerful or sad to every strain, even so
Predominant the same fair object ruled
Throughout my dreams, still adding to the bright
New lustre, cheering up the deepest gloom.

First by the green edge of a silent wood,
While twilight veiled the earth in purple shade,
I led her. On my arm I felt her hang
With delicate grasp—a grasp which sent a thrill
Along my nerves until it reached my heart.
At her request I plucked the opening buds
From branches high, and guarded round with thorns ;
Herself a rose no treacherous prickles guard ;
And so I told her, while by one white hand
I held her, with my other arm thrown round
Her waist. Deep in her dark eyes long I gazed—
Affection's very palace. Then I bent
To kiss her lovely rosebud lips ; but ah !
The vision faded quickly from my sight,
And only left unsatisfied desire.

My dream was changed. Deep in a gloomy pit
I thought myself. I tried to climb its sides
Of clay, but it was useless ; then I looked
Wishfully towards the top, and there I saw
Her stand, with eyes of pity turned on me.
I gazed and gazed, till, by the magic power
Of love, raised from my perilous situation,
I gradually ascended towards the top,
Where, planting on firm ground my foot, I spread
Mine arms, to clasp close to my heart the form
By which I had been raised ; when, as before,
She vanished, and I found myself alone.

My dream was changed. Along the craggy base
Of frowning mountains, round whose snow-capped
heads

The mist, like mantles, hung, I walked alone.
So high and jagged were the beetling cliffs,
No foot of man might climb them ; but my heart,
True as the needle pointing to the pole,
Informed me she was on the other side
Of the steep rocky barrier. Then I felt
New strength spring up within me from the flame
Of love—strange power to mount o'er obstacles—
And force my way through things impossible.
At once, o'er each snow-mantled ridge I passed,
Each lightning-rifted peak, and ravine dark,
And wildering vale, ne'er looked upon by man.
But when I reached her side, and was about
To clasp her in mine arms, the solid mass

Of towering rock dispersed, like vapoury cloud,
And her fair image vanished from my sight,
As morning stars do when the day returns !

My dream was changed. Through a low, dreary
vale

I passed in midnight darkness. Sombre pines
Frowned on high rocks, in black moss muffled deep.
No friendly star peeped through the pall of cloud,
Which overspread the sky. O'er rolling stones
And broken trunks I tumbled, and had nigh
Fallen headlong down a night-hid precipice ;
At length the air grew lighter ; yet until
I left the vale behind, I knew not why
Then, beaming radiant as the evening star,
I saw from far it was her glorious eye
Which lent the friendly ray. My bosom swelled
With gratitude, and then the scene dissolved.

My dream was changed. High on a mountain top
I stood alone. Far, far beneath, the earth
Stretched out, broad realms with towns and cities
specked.

Through the thin azure veil above mine head
I could discern the glittering towers and spires
Of that bright city, where, 'tis said, the just
Live happy, far above the storms which howl
Around this lower world, when, by the hand
Of death, they are transplanted to the skies.
And, gazing upwards, a sensation new

Possessed my soul—a wish for eagle's wings
To bear me to those ever-blest abodes.
Suddenly, from beyond the stunted pines,
Flying, a cherub came and pointed out
An easy staircase, leading up to heaven.
But far beneath me, at the mountain's base,
Mine eye, with telescopic power, perceived
My jewel. Could I go, and not make known
To her my new discovery? For the steps
I saw were wide enough for all mankind.
Descending, then, I called her, and she came,
Smiling her thanks, and upwards joyfully
We passed, and I was happy; but too soon
The glorious vision faded, yet it left
Graven on my memory's tablets deep its trace.

Once more my dream was changed. We were alone
Within a chamber richly furnished, hung
With crimson curtains round, and lighted up
With rosy tapers tall. No prying eye
Looked on us there. We were each other's own,
Each other's only. Gently to my breast
I clasped her; yielding willingly, my heart
Swelled out, as it would from its socket press
Into her very soul. But while I thus
Was in a sea of rapture bathed, the light
Of morn broke in, and all my fancied joy
Vanished, like morning mists before the sun.

Fain would I think the light of morn unreal,

And hold substantial the delusive dream,
And dream for ever, if in dreams with her
I, undisturbed, for ever could remain.

What mean these visions? Oh that I could ask
Some Oriental sage, who lived of old,
And could interpret dreams which visit sleep,
And look with piercing eye through all the depths
Of dark futurity, and prophesy
Concerning things to be in future years.
Ye spirits of the sages, sparks divine,
Who live yet, though your bodies long have lain
As silent dust and ashes, hither come
On wings invisible, and in mine ear
Whisper, if ye possess the power, what mean
Those sights which I have witnessed in my dreams.

Perchance some kindly spirit, hovering near
My bed, by them has sketched me out a map,
To indicate my journey to the hour,
The glorious hour of triumph, when even she
Will give consent to be for ever mine.
Yet how unlikely, for I know not yet
Where, nor in what direction, I should go
To find that home made sunny by her smiles.

Oh, could I find her! Sunbeams glancing bright,
You chased her lovely image from my dreams,
And my imagined happiness destroyed;
Your office is to point out hidden things—

Point out my love to me. Where'er she dwells,
Light up the air as with a beacon-blaze,
Shine ever round her in a flood of light,
That I may see and know her from afar,
And hasten to her side, and in that light
Myself grow glorious too, and so approve
Myself to her, and be for ever blest.

INTERLUDE.

Oh land of fair beauty! Oh realm of bright dreams!
Though, on thee, material light never beams,
Thou bringest the absent again to our sight—
We see them more lovely by visions of night.

Though night's darkest shadows were wrapt round my
head,
I saw my Selina when laid on my bed:
Her beauty seemed fairer than angels on high,
And radiant as sunlight that beams from the sky.

I kissed and caressed her, till morn's cruel light
Broke in on my slumber, and chased the fair sight;
But my heart deep within it the image shall keep
Of the beauty I looked on, in visions of sleep!

IV.—THE DAWN OF HOPE.

SELINA ! A still voice within mine ear,
A noiseless voice, oft seems to say that word,
As if an angel, speaking to my soul,
Whispered its syllables ; yet in a sound
Not sensible to my external ear.
With a quick bound my heart replies and leaps,
Fluttering and beating in my breast. Sometimes,
Soon after I retire to rest, when sleep
Begins to steep me in oblivion's sea,
And I forget all other things, her form,
Graceful as that of some bright angel come
Down from the heaven of heavens, appears to me.
Oft in the daytime, wandering on the moor,
Her sweet name I repeat to listening shrubs
And nibbling sheep, which raise their heads and look,
Then turn again to graze, and heed me not.

Yet as a beacon on some distant hill
Appears to those who never knew its place,
When suddenly its flames beam through the night ;
So rays of hope have, unexpected, shone
Out of the darkness of despair on me.
And though, as yet, the light is distant, faint,
And vague, the sparkling gleam, perhaps, will soon
Spread out aloft into a brighter blaze.

My mother, kind and gentle as becomes
All womankind to be ! how did she find
My treasured secret out ? By looks, not words,
Have I betrayed myself ; unless it be
That I have talked about her in my sleep.
However, I regret it not, for she
Has gained the knowledge which I sought in vain ;
And with such delicacy as belongs
But to the fair, to me communicated
All that she knew, without even giving cause
To spread one bashful blush across my cheek.

'Twas in the evening, after work was done,
She and my sister in the twilight sat
Beside the kitchen fire : I was alone,
Reading the big old history, which was left
To us by my great-grandfather, beside
The parlour window, near the open door,
And, in the stillness, every sound passed through ;
So, talking to my sister, she described
Selina by the dress she wore that day
When I beheld her first upon the hill ;
And mentioned how she in the village dwells,
Whose tall white spire, and curling wreaths of smoke,
I oft have, on clear frosty mornings, seen
From yon brown ridge. Some other things she
said,
Which made me hope Selina will not be
Above my reach, when opportunity
Presents itself to tell my tale of love.

Last night I climbed the hill to look again
On the dear distant village where she dwells.
The air was calm and mild, and all the sky
Was covered with grey cloud, except one patch
Of blue far to the west, from which a flood
Of golden sunlight fell on the red roofs
And green fields near ; all else around was dark
And sad and cheerless. Not a breath of wind
Stirred on the heath. The clouds were motionless.
The mellow beams ceased not to shed their soft
And rosy beauty on her dwelling, till
They gradually changed to sunset dyes.
Thus ever shed, O glorious shining orb,
Thy rays upon her, round her, in a glow
Of never-fading glory. Yet thy beams
Are needless in her presence : she herself
Fills all the air with sunshine : all the world
Is dark to me when separate from her.

To-morrow will be Sunday ; this again
Reminds me that on Sabbath mornings oft,
When southern winds were breathing warm and soft,
I've heard faint tinklings of that distant bell
Swinging in the grey tower, whose tapering spire,
Close by her home, points upwards to the realms
Where angels walk in beauty ;—she herself
Their sister, quite as lovely, quite as fair.
I almost think I see her glancing up
With face all radiant as the sunlit skies,
When the soft silvery chime invites her forth

To God's own house, and turns her thoughts to
heaven.

I almost think I see her spirit soar
Higher and higher in the ethereal blue,
Her eyes quite closed to earth and earthly things,
Until it reach the home of love, and there
Breathe for a time its native element.
Oh, if that world to which the pale-faced priest,
With earnest voice and brightly beaming eye,
So often points us, have inhabitants
Like her—if love transforms in heaven the face
Of every saint, and lights it up with beams
So bright, would I could mount aloft on wings,
And leave this cold dark world behind for ever ;
Yet, since the world contains a form so sweet,
So radiant, I'll complain no more, while still
She here remains to fill the earth with light.

To-morrow, if the day be fine, I'll walk
Over to church. Perhaps kind fortune may
Guide me to choose a seat not far from her.
'Tis but six miles, and if I only gain
A glimpse of her sweet face, 'twill quite repay
My journey ; for the hardest toil for her
To me is quite as easy as repose.

INTERLUDE.

Guide me, star of hope,
Guide me on my way ;

Point me to her side
With thy trembling ray.

When night's shadows fall,
Do not shut thine eye ;
Trim thy taper bright
In the fading sky.

Thou hast seen my love
By thine own faint light ;
Thou hast seen her home
From thy beacon height.

Guide me with thy beams
On the uncertain way ;
Point me to her side
With thy trembling ray.

V.—A LIGHT BEHIND THE CURTAIN.

RICH strains of music ! In mine ear still rings
That harmony, so full and clear and sweet,
As if it floated down the air from heaven.
Stealing, at first, with soft and easy flow,
Like the faint murmurings of a shepherd's flute
Across the vale at eve, it filled the ear
With rapture ; each succeeding strain begot
An eager wish for something richer still :

Then, when desire grew strong, the silvery trill
Was swallowed in a full and rolling swell,
Which roused the spirit, like the voice of storms
Howling through pinewoods on the mountain's brow,
Or sea-waves breaking in a rocky bay ;
Wave following wave of sound, until at last
They died away to a soft soothing close.
And even when silence, in the long dim aisles
Regained her rule, from every arched recess
And vaulted roof, the voice of echo seemed
Fain to repeat each thrilling strain once more.

Long ere the bells had ceased to chime, I took
My seat, where I could get a view of all
Who entered by the porch, and with mine eye
Sweep easily choir, nave, and columned aisle.
Group after group passed in, till nearly all
The seats were filled. With reverential air
And dark eye glancing upwards, robed in white,
The minister passed slowly to his desk :
The bells then ceased, the beadle came and closed
The massive door, and softly walked away.
Why did my love not enter ? On my soul
There fell a shade of sadness. Though the sun
Shone brightly through the painted windows, where
Frown the grim pictures of the bearded saints,
And angels spread their wings, yet all his beams
Cheered not my sinking heart. I felt like one
Sitting within the chamber where still lies
The pale dead corpse of some beloved friend,

Whose presence used to cheer. Hope, which had shed
Its rays on me so brightly, now was dead,
And thrown into its coffin by despair.

While there I sat, in melancholy wrapt,
The service took its usual course of prayer
And praise, accompanied now and then by strains
Of harmony from the gilt organ-pipes.
With every gush of that sweet sound, the cloud,
Whose deepening shadows on me, round me fell,
Grew lighter for a time. The hands which pressed
The keys, by a broad curtain, hung on rods
Of polished brass, were hidden from my sight ;
But, from the richness of the harmony,
I felt, whoever played, that it must be
Some one with more than ordinary skill.

At length, when prayers and chants were all gone
through,
And, in his long black gown, the minister
Went up the pulpit-stairs, a small white hand
Slipped gently from behind the crimson folds,
And drew the curtain back. If from the pole,
In all his brightness, suddenly the sun
Had risen at midnight, rolling back the pall
Of darkness, should I have been more surprised,
For from her hiding-place looked out my love !
Now I could understand what made my heart
To burn with such warm feelings of delight,
When the sweet music from the fairy-touch

Of her white fingers swelled. I feel convinced
That He who gives all minds their qualities,
Has made us kindred spirits. Face to face
We sat, our eyes met, then a crimson blush
Spread gently from the centre of her cheek
Up to the very roots of glossy hair,
Thrown from her temples back in curling waves ;
Then, with her eyes fixed on the floor, she sat
As musing in deep thought. Would that mine eye
Could but have pierced, with supernatural vision,
Into that deep recess, where all her thoughts
Are first conceived, and thus have cleared away
All doubt, by reading what is written there.

Yet it was pure enjoyment thus to sit
Where, without interruption, I could gaze
On her sweet face. It seemed as if even then
I had attained my heaven ; as if I could
Have sat contented, gazing on for ever.
But all things earthly end. We rose at last,
Received the benediction, and prepared
Each to our separate homes to wend our way.

I wached my opportunity and got
Close to her, passing through the dusky porch.
Beside the door she hovered to adjust
Her dress. I touched her arm in walking past,
An accidental touch it was, so thick
The crowd, but still it made my pulses beat
More quickly, sent a thrill through all my frame.

With gentle dignity she walked away ;
I watched her to her home,—it stands just where
The cross-road branches toward the market town
From the broad village street. Within my heart
I envied even the gate-posts leading in
To where she dwells ; wished I could be transformed
Into the handle on her door, that I
Might daily feel the press of her sweet hand,
And see that lovely form, for which, if I
Possessed them, I would give even worlds to buy.

But I am poor, our family is poor,
Our home a wretched cottage thatched with straw,
Upon the barren heath, while hers is far
The noblest in the village, stands upon
A fertile slope, where meads and cornfields smile.
Her father also fills, as I am told,
An honourable post on the estate :
Can I persuade myself that she would leave
So good a home for such a wretch as I ?

Why not, if He, who formed man's wondrous frame,
Filled it with life, and then created love,
The warmth of which, in spite of chilling storms,
Has surging kept the mighty tide of man
Through countless generations to this hour—
If He decrees, no home, however rich,
Can match the charm of love. I can't forget
That spreading blush, those softening down-cast eyes.
Selina loves ! Hail glorious days to come,
Sooner or later, days when I am blest !

INTERLUDE.

When thrilling strains of music swell
From organ-pipe or harper's string,
When, softly echoing through the dale,
The Highland shepherd's strathspeys ring,
In those recesses, hidden deep
Within the chambers of the brain,
An unknown lyre awakes from sleep,
Responding to each happy strain.

When hearts, all fresh in youth, have found
The faultless object of their love,
When souls round souls are gently wound,
And each the other's treasure prove,
Love's influence gives them power to trace
Beauty more fair in all they see,
A charm still sweeter seems to grace
The richest strains of melody.

But when the twain are joined in one—
When music flows from beauty's soul—
A note angelic seems each tone,
A song of heaven appears the whole,
The heart exults in raptures sweet;
Impressions, that long years which roll
Can never from the memory beat,
Are firmly fixed upon the soul.

VI.—DISCONTENT.

On the bleak ridges of dark frowning hills,
Day after day for ever toiling on !
Day after day, and yet they bring no change !
Will it be ever thus ? If so, would Heaven
That I had no existence ! Better far
It were to live not, than to live where falls
The shade of such a settled cloud of gloom.

I can't imagine how this heavy heart,
Which weighs within me like a ball of lead,
Could dance so lightly at a dream of joy
As once it did, some months ago, at church,
When I again beheld that form, which now
Chains my soul fast to sadness. Months have passed,
Months of this dull monotonous life, nor brought
Me nearer to the object of my love ;
Long months, of which each day appears an age !
Still wearing, weighing, pressing heavier still ;
Months, ever breathing out my life in sighs
For what I never can gain. But I must rise
Above my present level, must achieve
Something to make me worthy. I am glad
That time, most fruitful of materials,
By me has not been wasted. I have striven
Never to let a day pass, leaving me
No scrap of knowledge. I was much surprised

The other day, in company with one
Who, when we went to school together, worked
Hard Fractions, then to me a mystery,
While I was fighting with the Rule of Three—
Was much surprised to find that, though my days
Have nearly all been passed in solitude
Upon the heath, yet, cultivating still
My mind as doth the gardener his ground,
The glorious tree of knowledge growing there
Bends with a far more goodly load of fruit
Than his, though planted in a happier soil.

Could I not fill that office, which I heard
Will be left vacant soon, not far from where
She dwells? I'm told that what is most required
Is penmanship, and in that art I think
That I excel. If it were possible
That I could be elected, what a world
Of happiness I see for me reserved
Beyond the mists which curtain these dark hills!

Oh, what a change it would be! every day,
Sunday and week-day both alike, to dress
In a good suit of fashionable cloth,
A West-end collar, and a well-starched front;—
These would attract her eye. How could I hope,
How durst I venture even to dream that she,
Fair princess, far the loveliest of her kind,
Would under any circumstance ally
Herself to a poor shepherd? When I look

Upon these patched cord-trousers, and stroke down
This old torn harding slop, I feel at once
My suit is hopeless, till I take a step
Far in advance of what I yet have been.

That office ! But what chance of such a thing,
When in the neighbouring town no doubt some scores
Of hungry, white-faced, town-worn swells will rush
And scramble hard to gain it,—men whose tongues,
From daily practice, have grown smooth and glib !
How dare I hope ? But love cries, “ Hope, hope on,
Hope ever ; strive, be brave and persevere,
For if thou faintest not, thou shalt prevail ! ”

By Heaven, I'll try ! Not many months ago
My cheek with blushes would have burnt, my heart
Have palpitated at the thought ; but now
Love lends me courage, gives me energy,
And a strong will determined to perform
Whatever will bring me nearer to the mark—
The prize which I have set myself to gain.
All difficulties in the way shall fall
Before the strength of this undaunted will,
Which shall not fail till, the rough battle fought,
The victory won, I rest this head at last
In peace on my Selina's gentle breast.

INTERLUDE.

Sadly o'er dreary hills,
Where mists their tear-drops weep,

My solitary rounds
I take among the sheep.

Sometimes I wish I were
At rest among the dead ;
I carry in my breast
A heart that weighs like lead.

Will it be ever thus,
Will change nor hope appear ?
Hark ! through the mist a sound
Like angel tones floats clear !

“ The brave deserve the fair ;
Courage ! exert thy strength !
Press on ! Thy brightening course
Shall bring success at length ! ”

VII.—GLIMPSES OF SUNSHINE.

SCRIBBLING ! for ever scribbling ! all day long ;
Wearily tracing, with the pliant pen,
Broad lines of black across the smooth white page,
Until mine eyelids smart and temples ache !
Ah ! little dreamt I, when, in bygone days,
Passing this window, I have chanced to see,
And envied him who occupied this room

Before I came, that to his daily charge
Was coupled such a load of care. To tend
The sheep lighthearted, though a humbler sphere,
Is a far happier life ; and were it not
That I was working for that beauteous prize,
My change I bitterly should rue—should wish
For my old haunts on broad, brown fields of heath,
And those companions which will miss me now—
The screaming lapwing, plover wheeling round,
Dark grouse, which, chattering, skim with out-stretched
wing
The waste ; and, more than all, the woolly flocks ;
Another tends them now. But when I turn
My thoughts to her, my beautiful ! my sweet !
I deem myself, in spite of all this toil,
Which wearies me, the happiest man that breathes.

Twice have I met her in the village street
Since I came here, each time exchanged a nod
Of courtesy, while on her parted lips
Played such a lovely smile. I know that well
I answered it ; the feelings she awoke
Within me must have been by looks expressed.
Each Sabbath morn I see her at the church,
Where, from her soul, wells out a glorious flow
Of music, through the glittering organ-pipes,
Floats down the aisle, and, entering in mine ear,
Becomes a part of me ; my soul dissolves
In rapture, with it mixes every strain.
In solitude, and in my morning dreams,

The echo of my heart again repeats
Each phrase, to rouse my spirit, or to soothe.
The shady lanes, all sweet with cowslip-breath,
Or starred with roses, now attract me not
To loiter, when I hear the silvery chime
Invite me to approach, and there receive
Another draught from that exhaustless soul.

Last evening, after service, as I walked
Slowly along the footpath leading through
The meadows to the lane, the western sky
Was all aglow, such tints of rose and gold
Flaming, the finest sunset I have seen.
Beside the foot-bridge, just below the pool,
In whose smooth breast each purple cloudlet waved,
I stood beneath the spreading trees, and gazed
Till my eyes filled with water from the strain
Upon their orbs, so much it pleased my sight.
Suddenly, on the rustling hay, I heard
Light feet approach; I turned; who should it be
But dear Selina, and a matron, who
Bore on her head the silvery sign of age.
They, too, were looking at the rosy glow
Above the green tree-tops. On seeing me
The elder spake, with a good-natured smile,
"Is'nt it *lovely!*" On Selina's form
Fell the dim purple rays. She nothing said;
But I observed the expression on her face—
A look so full of meaning, so sincere,
Guileless, and, as I think, expressing love.

Onward they passed, along the rustic bridge,
Up the stone steps, and soon were out of sight.

Yes, lovely was that beauteous sunset sky,
A picture meet for glorious eyes like thine !
I saw thee gaze in admiration deep
On that bright golden sea, where surge on surge
Of cloud, each moment changing shape and hue,
Cast down a flood of purple light on thee—
I saw thee gaze, but *I* beheld a sight
More fair than thou didst ; 'twas thy lovely self,
Cheering the twilight with thine own sweet smile—
The fairest star in nature then to me !

Fair star ! fair gem ! nay, gem of all creation !
Every comparison is lost on thee,
Thou lovely, perfect image of thy kind !
And has this heart of mine presumed to love thee ?
And is that love, or will it be returned ?
Oh, Time, worn slow with age, increase thy speed ;
Haste swiftly onward, for I feel the day
Will come which sees that choicest treasure mine ;
Then thou mayest pause and rest thy weary feet,
Nor drive with hurrying pace the lagging hours,
Which in such happiness I then shall spend.

INTERLUDE.

Would I were a sunbeam,
Glorious, born on high,
In yon orb, whose beauty
Tints the changing sky.

Where red clouds are floating,
I would never stay,
Nor be spent on woodland,
Moor, or mountain grey.

From my wings I'd scatter
Beauty, flying still ;
But I'd never tarry
In my course, until

On that form so lovely,
And that beauteous head,
All my fairest colours
I had richly shed.

Her dark curls should glisten
Lovelier in my light,
And the depths I'd enter
Of her eyes so bright.

On her cheeks I'd softly
Press my kisses warm ;
With my light I'd guide her
Safe from every harm.

Touched by me, her beauty
Should superbly shine,
Till, oh, glorious angel !
She would seem divine.

Would I were a sunbeam,
Glorious, born in heaven,
If, to dear Selina,
Only I were given.

VIII.—EXULTATION.

PEACE, throbbing heart ! Thou needst not flutter now.
The ice is broken, and yet bears me safe—
Broken where I was afraid I should slip in,
Hopeless and helpless. Now the giant form
Of fear, which long deterred me from the attempt,
Melts, vanishes like smoke, and proves it was
But a dark phantom of my own creation,
Which sealed my lips, and kept me silent long,—
A phantom, without cause to bring it forth,
Though marked in its effects. So, throbbing heart,
Cease thy tumultuous beating. I have told
The secret ; whispered softly in her ear
My thoughts as thou didst prompt me, yet no frown
Clouded her fair white brow. With downcast eye
She, blushing, listened meekly to my tale.

In this dim grove, where scented woodbines twine
Their amorous arms around each stem, while stars
Peep through the leaves above, let me lie down,
And turn my thoughts to her, the flower of flowers,
The star of stars, who, in the days to come,

On me shall never set, but still shine on—
Both day and night shall all my life illumine.

Blest be that gentle spirit of the spring,
Which planted flowers in wood and lane and field,
Breathing forth fragrance, and in beauty drest.
It was their charm which drew her forth at eve,
To gather, by the woodland's twilight edge,
An odorous bunch, ere dews of evening fell.
I, too, love flowers, and took a stroll to breathe
Their fragrance, where the winding footpath turns
Up by the streamlet to the wild wood's side.
There I espied her, stooping down to pluck
Some wild forget-me-nots, whose azure eyes
Spangled the sward beneath the emerald shade.
How from its peaceful quiet leapt my heart,
Rousing up all my pulses from their sleep
Into tumultuous beating! Through my frame
Passed a wild tremor; so confused I felt,
That all the speeches I had treasured up
For such occasion fled. I should have passed
Without even speaking, but she turned and smiled—
A smile of sweet encouragement—a smile
So pleasant that I felt at liberty
To use my tongue anon. I saw a blush
Of modesty steal over her fair face,
And kind was her reply; in which she asked
The name of some wild flowers, to her unknown.

Conversing then we slowly sauntered on

Together ; my embarrassment wore off,
And soon we entered the dim, shady wood,
Where, on a mossy bank, we sat us down.
Bright flowers were peeping through the twilight gloom,
And near, a blooming woodland rose-tree shed
Its balmy odours through the air around.
From its tall branches soon I plucked a bud,
And placed it in her hand. She did not smile
Nor blush, but with a look sedate she took
And placed it on her breast. Then to my heart
I drew her, yielding, and upon her lips
Impressed a kiss ; oh, such a kiss ! a kiss
Met by the sweetest lips that ever breathed ;
And that dear throbbing heart was close to mine—
Sole object of my love ; and both mine arms
Were thrown around that gem of all creation,
For which, if all creation was my own
Apart from her, I'd barter it—a kiss
Received, returned, with love reciprocal,
But half expected. How survived my heart,
How lived it through the earthquake in my breast,
The wild eruption of tumultuous joy !

It lived, and lives for her alone ! It lives,
And shall do still, to bless her and be blest.
Our love shall last for ever. Glorious sun,
Shoot tenfold radiance from thy crown of beams,
And shine the news to a rejoicing world.
Our love shall last when thou hast ceased to shine.
For, when we yield these forms, now beautiful

In youth, to dust, our spirits, by whose power
This earth and air and water has been framed
Into such grace and beauty, shall, unclogged
By earthly clay, unbarred by substance, mix
In one embrace, to last through endless age.

INTERLUDE.

Fair flower, of all that live
The sweetest and the best,
And to thy loving lips
Have mine been gently pressed ?

And have these arms been thrown
Around thy precious form,
These arms that fain would guard
Thee from each howling storm ?

They have, and found thee kind,
As thou art pure and fair—
Pure as the saints above,
Beauteous as angels are.

The skies may pass away,
The universe may be
Destroyed, but never shall fail
The love I feel for thee.

IX.—DISAPPOINTMENT.

WRAPT in a flowing robe of fleecy cloud,
Which she herself makes luminous, the moon
Trails o'er the eastern hills her silvery train.
Each rocky crag and dusky woodland steep
On which she looks grows radiant in her smile.
Thus my Selina, sweet enchantress, turns
Darkness to light, dispels the deepest gloom.

To-night she promised she would meet me here,
“ When dews distil by moonlight, and the wind
Sighs his love-whispers to the forest leaves ; ”
Here prying eyes of man shall not disturb,
While, still caressing her, I tell her part
Of what time failed me to disclose before.
Withhold your drops, ye clouds, be clear and fair,
Ye changing skies, and cast no obstacle
Betwixt me and my promised feast of love.

Why comes she not? Tis strange ! The appointed
time

Is past. I cannot doubt Selina's word ;
She promised, yet she comes not. Ha ! I hear
The gate, where, from the winding lane the path
Turns up the meadows toward the silent wood.
She comes. Perhaps she may have been detained
By company, or haply did not find
An opportunity to slip away ;

But she will soon be here, and one sweet kiss
Repays for all the anxiety I feel.

That gate again ! This time it *must* be her ;
I'll saunter slowly onward towards the stile,
Where I can scan the track across the field.
A dusky speck close by the hawthorn hedge
Moves slowly from the further corner on.
A speck, a point, but ah ! that point contains
More wealth for me than worlds of priceless worth.
As some bright diamond hidden in the shade
Of Orient mines, in value far exceeds
The monstrous hill beneath whose base it hides,
So she, who at this distance looks so small,
Far, far outvalues all on which these eyes,
In earth, or heaven, now rest upon around.

Now it comes nearer. I can almost trace
The outline of her form. The night-breeze sings
Through blossomed branches far above my head,
And silver moonbeams beautify the flowers.
Sing on, bloom on, in all your beauty bloom ;
But I have neither eyes nor ears for you,
Though you be ne'er so lovely ; for as stars
Still bright as ever in the eyes of day
Are not perceived because they are outshone,
So you are seen not when my queen appears.

Move on, sweet image. I can feel my heart
Beat in my breast. My treasure now is near,

I hear her tread ; I see behind the hedge
Her form approach the stile. Now she ascends,—
A moment, just a step, and I am blest.

Oh heavens ! can I give credence to these eyes ?
Or do the uncertain moonlight gleams deceive ?
'Tis some one else ! Oh, throbbing heart, support
This sinking frame ; but thou thyself art faint,
Hope's apparition vanished leaves thee sick.
I feel as one who starts up suddenly
On his dry couch of powdery desert sand,
From a sweet dream of murmuring waterfalls,
Green fields, cool leafy shades, and trickling springs,
To which his dry, parched lips were just approaching,
When bursts again, unwelcome, on his eye
The burning sun above the circling wild.

I'll wait a little longer ; can it be
That swell is there, whom I saw walking past
The office-door to-day ? He seemed to have
No lack of self-esteem, and as he strode
Along, swung round and round a polished cane.
I watched him stretching onward till he reached
The meadow footpath leading to her home.
What does it mean ? What was his business there ?
And what can have detained her ? Those sharp eye-
Sparkling with wicked light, have looked upon
My dove. I tremble in my heart for her.

But oh ! she surely never could forget

That long, long kiss, by fervent lips impressed.
Ye trees, ye flowers, our only witnesses,
Remind her when she turns her eyes on you.
She is too wise to barter such a heart
As mine—a heart, though worthless in itself,
Touched by her love has been transformed to gold—
For the glib verbage of deceitful tongues.

But the night wears. Two hours or more have
passed
Since the appointed time, so I'll return.
Some proper reason has no doubt withheld
Her from my arms to-night. When next we meet
The disappointment I have felt will give
To our embraces an additional joy.
Farewell! sweet woodland, witness of our love,
Ere long, I hope, we are again thy guests.

INTERLUDE.

O dark old woods, through whose green leaves
Peeps the soft silvery light,
O closing flowers, on which distil
The tear-drops of the night,—
To you, to Nature weeping round,
I bid a sad good-night!

A sad good-night, but soon I hope
To be again your guest;
When you, I trust, will witness me
In her full sunshine blest,

Resting my head where gently heaves
That dear, sweet, loving breast.

Then the sad cloud which wraps me round,
In her reviving light,
Shall disappear, as fly at morn
The misty clouds of night.
So now, to you, to Nature bathed
In tears, I bid good-night.

X.—JEALOUSY.

I CAN'T imagine by what door that scene,
Which ever haunts me, to my mind has found
An entrance. Was it spoken by a friend,
When, with my mind absorbed by something else,
I heeded not, till afterwards mine ear,
Retaining still the echo, made it known ;
Or did an angel take a spirit-sketch,
And show it to my fancy in a dream ?
I know not, but however that may be,
My memory, mostly faithful to her task,
Has caught a true impression, painted it
In strong and well-marked shades, and, on the wall
Of her long picture-gallery, hung it up
In a conspicuous place. Whenever I turn
Mine eyes within, at once it meets my gaze.
I see them sitting round the flickering fire,

My sweet Selina, unsuspecting soul,
Too true and innocent herself to think
Evil of others, meeting each and all
With kindly smiles. I see that treacherous face,
On which hypocrisy and wickedness
Have placed their brand; I hear that subtle tongue
Slander me, even in my true love's ear;
And, through the fitful light, I see each face
Grin with malicious laughter at my cost,
Who am without the means of self-defence,
Because in body absent. I behold
That coward, that black fiend in human shape,
For the small pittance of a merry laugh
Raised by admiring clowns, without regret
Attack the fairest prospect of my life,—
Remorseless push my hopes to ruin's brink,
And strive to poison that dear angel's soul.

He cannot, for the title-deeds which give
My right to her are writ on leaves of love—
Imperishable leaves! which still shall last,
When wickedness like his has turned the sun
As black as midnight clouds, and troops of fiends
Dance round the ashes of a smouldering world!
The words love's angel did indite. The stars
Are witness. Spirits felt their influence—
Spirits which time and death will not destroy!

But still she *heard* his base accursed words,—
They must have given her tender spirit pain;

And I must seek an early interview
To justify myself from such a charge.
I've seldom seen her by herself of late,
But I will take her privately aside,—
She can't refuse, we have been friends so long,
And keep a secret, too, between ourselves.

So, slanderer base, thy malice shall recoil
On thine own head, the wound which thou hast given
To both our hearts shall quickly heal again ;
The attack which thou hast made shall prove our love
Invulnerable still, a vital growth
No power in all creation can destroy.

INTERLUDE.

When the poisonous tongue of envy
Strives her unsuspecting soul,
Far too pure to dream of evil,
To seduce with words so foul,
Angels guard her,
While black demons round her howl.

Guard and keep her, she your sister
Must with you high favour find ;
Make that villain's black word-weapons
Hateful to her pure, bright mind ;
Safely keep her,
Ye to keep the good designed.

XL.—PERSEVERANCE

Two years of love, still wishing, longing, sighing !
Two years ! and am I nearer to attain
The object of my passion than I was
Two years ago ? Each Sabbath morn at church
Additional fuel I receive to keep
The flame of love still burning in my breast ;
But never do we chance to meet alone,—
Her elder sisters, ever by her side,
Keep watch and guard. An opportunity
I never find to speak a private word,
To clear myself from slander, or assert
My claim to her, my right which love has given.

I sometimes think that my society
She studies to avoid. But what have I
To offer her ?—a noble, passionate heart,
A mind with plenteous store of knowledge filled,
Each worth consideration in its place ;
But to the fact I cannot close mine eyes,
That something more is wanted to secure
A life of happiness. Two years I've toiled,
My earnings just supporting me, no more.
This is well-known to her, and can I blame
Her prudent forethought ? No. Yet when I see
Such wisdom, gentleness, and beauty joined,
I deem her true perfection, and regret
To live, if I must live by her uncheered.

I wonder if the news I heard be true,
That a provision has been made for such
As, by examination, prove themselves
Sufficiently advanced in scholarship,
To send them at a very trifling cost
Two years to college, where, by diligence,
They may possess themselves of means to live
Far more respectably than they could do,
Taking the ordinary course of things.
If it be true (I'm confidently told
It is) I very soon might fit myself
To pass with honour. Labouring year by year
To cultivate that nobler part, my mind—
To fill with useful knowledge, and improve
Its temper, and expand its faculties,
I find it now at last a casket stored
With treasure richer far than gold or gems.
A few more months in careful study spent,
Might make me more than equal to the task.
Then what a glorious prospect! I should cast
With ease that skipping coxcomb in the shade,
Whose visits to Selina's home, of late,
Have been repeated oft enough to place
My peace in danger, spite of that conceit
And want of sterling sense which I despise.
Twirl round thy polished cane ; with all due care
Brush thy moustache ; each morn take up thy clubs
And swing them round, thy figure to improve ;—
Selina's eye shall penetrate such dross,
By which thou strivest to disguise and hide

Thy poverty within. But when I come
 From college fresh, a star in my profession,
 And master of a home, superior far
 To what thou couldst provide,—thoughts of the hour
 We once enjoyed in shade of woodlands deep,
 Shall soon awake again from memory's sleep,
 The sparks of love now hid in embers thick
 Shall spread into a flame. Heaven lend me aid,
 Who hast inspired me with such passionate love;
 Increase my bravery, while with diligence
 An honourable object I pursue,
 Till I surmount each barrier on the road
 Conducting me to my Selina's breast.

INTERLUDE.

Be strong and brave,
 O heart, and wondrous things thou shalt achieve;
 Be strong and brave,
 For thou shalt conquer all the foes which grieve,—
 Be strong and brave.

Be strong and brave,
 Thou fightest in an honourable field;
 Be strong and brave,
 They conquer who determine not to yield,—
 Be strong and brave.

Be strong and brave,
 The will which moves thee still shall lead thee on;

Be strong and brave,
Slack not thine efforts till the battle's won,—
Be strong and brave.

Triumph at last
Shall deck thee with fair Victory's palmy crown ;
Triumph at last
Thou shalt ; and having trod the opposers down,
Triumph at last !

XII.—NIGHT THOUGHTS IN A RAILWAY CARRIAGE.

WHIRLING and rattling ! swiftly rolling on,
'Mid thickest darkness ! Borne o'er hills and dales,
To me as little known as those which lie
Upon the farther side of Luna's orb !
Night's sable curtain everywhere drawn round,
The sky shuts out the light, and gloomy clouds
Absorb the faint rays of the twinkling stars ;
Yet on, with undiminished speed we roll.
The signal-lights flash past. In rocky dells
Unnumbered echoes leap from crag to crag,
Breaking the deathlike silence of the night,
While far behind we leave their rocky caves.
Range behind circling range of darkling hills
Divide me now from those familiar scenes

On which mine eyes have, ever since my birth
To this eventful hour, been wont to rest—
The only spot where I am not a stranger
In the wide surface of the monstrous world.

But though so far from home, and darting still
Out from the centre of my circle, swift
As birds of passage, chased away by storms
Of winter coming on before their time,
I leave my heart behind me ; only range
Like the young eagle, which with dext'rous swoop
Skims the wide plain to seize the means of life,
And then return with it to where his mate
Waits for him in the mountain's rifted brow.

But as, at times, that prince of birds of prey
Meets danger in his wild adventurous flight,
Or yields reluctant to a sad reverse
Of fortune, which compels him to return
Without his prey, so it may be with me.
Ere sets to-morrow's sun I must contend
With practised brains, all choice ones from the flock,
The monstrous flock of England's millions drawn ;
Even at this hour, whirling along the rails,
From distant corners of the realm they come,—
Each to put forth his utmost energy.
Some will be weeded out. Thou burning flame
Of passion, turbulent within my breast,
To-morrow prove thy strength ; my mind inspire,
If need be, far to overshoot itself,

And gain the pass from which an even road
Conducts me to the goal of my desire.

Ha ! from beyond these fields a line of lights
Gleam yellow through the sable locks of night ;
A glow above as of reflected flame,
Tips every hanging fold of gloomy cloud.
Still whirling onward, I distinctly now
Perceive a far-extended row disposed
Quite regularly, while behind them gleam
Promiscuous groups, and as we nearer draw,
Loud yells of engines break at intervals
The sad, monotonous rattle of the train ;
And now we slacken gradually and stop ;
A hum of sounds confused salutes the ear.
It is the city's monstrous voice which sounds,
Rising and falling, like the noise of seas.
The scene of doubtful contest now is near.

Beneath the lamps of yonder opening street
I see a crowd of moving human forms ;
Now nearer I perceive dark surge on surge,
More numerous than the tribe of woodland ants
Round their brown hillock on a summer's day.
Amid such countless myriads what am I ?
A poor, lorn, friendless, simple countryman ;
And come I with the glib tongues, piercing eyes,
And practised brains of citizens to strive ?
Dare hope, even venture to predict success ?

But when I turn my thoughts on thee, fair dove,
Fairer than all this monstrous human tide,
My spirit burns within me, and my soul
Mounts as it were with more than earthly strength.
Bear up, brave spirit, for the time draws near
When I shall rise or sink in dark despair.

INTERLUDE.

Fairest of millions, gentlest heart,
My spirit ever turns to thee;
The pole-star of my soul thou art,
And I, a magnet, drawn to thee.

Yet should'st thou ask me to explore
Regions, or distant, dark, or rude,
Creation's wilds I'd travel o'er,
If it would please or do thee good.

XIII.—MIDNIGHT MUSINGS IN A COLLEGE
DORMITORY.

THE Minster-bell strikes twelve. Another week
Is past. Thank Heaven, we now have seven days less
To spend imprisoned in these Bedlam halls,—
Are seven days nearer that much-wished-for hour
When we shall issue from this dungeon free!

Oh, weary, dreary days! Time ne'er appeared

To travel with so slow a pace as now.
It seems as if, while slowly journeying round
The far-extended sky, the weary sun
Makes long and frequent stoppages to rest.
Each day appears an age. Two years extend
Like an interminable plain before,
And rough and stony is the ground we tread.

In bygone years I have encountered forms
Of difficulty, which, like giants armed,
Lay in my path ; but here strange barriers rise,
Rugged and steep, like mountains towering high,
Of threatening aspect, far beyond the range
Of vision, in whose caverns fancy sees
Unprecedented monsters watching, fain
To seize in treachery my most cherished hopes,
And mar the joy of all my future years.

Within those dreary walls confined, we look
Out through the iron palings, as the birds
In wire-formed cage, that gaze with wistful eyes
At sunny fields and woodlands far away.
Forbidden without leave to pass these gates,
Our souls grow weary of the same dull round.
Hemmed in by walls of brick, our spirits turn
With envy to the very beasts which feed
On yon fair line of hills, far, far away.

Before the first faint ray of glimmering light,
Which ushers in the cold March morning, steals

Across yon distant wold, the harsh-toned bell
Startles the birds that have not yet begun
Their morning chirruping along the roofs,
And calls us forth, all shivering, from our beds,
To enter on another day of toil.
Like some fair state which suffers in the shock
Of armies, that would seize it for its prey,
But must needs with each other first contend ;
Even so our morning hours become a seat
Of war perpetual, waged 'twixt college rules,
Which strive to add them to their territory,
And that dull monarch, the wronged god of sleep ;
One minute sees us strive to exercise
Our reason with some stupid proposition,
The next, reclining on the cold hard desk,
Our melting thoughts mix with oblivion's sea.

Ah me ! It seems as if the wintry storms
Will be subdued no more by breath of spring.
Through the long evening hours the icy wind
Howls up the cloisters with a piteous moan,
And enters in beneath the door, and chills
Our feet, till they become like senseless stones,
While in the lukewarm stove a few faint sparks,
Glimmering with dreams of comfortable fires,
Mock us, poor slaves, who dare not even draw near !

Ere I came here it was my chief delight
To feed my mind with knowledge, and with care
To exercise its every faculty.

But oh ! this horrid cram ! We swallow down
Rich meals upon full stomachs, till they rise
And vomit part, nor profit by the rest ;
We strain at strange impossibilities,
And weaken what our aim is to improve.

These all are disagreeable, but far
More bitter is the hatred and the strife
So prevalent among us. I have seen
Mankind in various phases—never till now
Guessed half the wickedness of human hearts.
This bruise still pains me. Under false pretence
Of sport, a wretch behind me dealt the blow.
I know that envious malice prompted him.
Even now, when night has drawn its curtains round
The world, and bids mankind lie down in peace,
Angels of rest depart, with tear-stained cheeks,
And leave this earthly hell, this mad-house, filled
With men possessed of devils. Now I hear
A scream of terror from a distant part
Of the long dusky corridor,—some one
Surprised in sleep is tumbled from his bed.
His timorous shriek provokes the laugh of fools.
But let me up, and barricade my door,
Or a foul joke may soon be played on me.
I hear them softly whispering, not far off,
So I'll anticipate them, and for once
Prevent them in their mischievous intent.

To-morrow is the day of rest. No rest

Visits these gloomy halls. Like wild beasts caged,
These kennelled dogs go howling round the place,
Still bent on mischief; all, save one or two,
Who here resemble precious diamonds, thrown
Upon a heap of rough unpolished stones,
Which, ever rolling, scratch and mar them still.
The peaceful Sabbath, when the world reposes,
All, save ourselves, is turned into a day
Almost unbearable. O for a nook
In the far corner of some distant field,
Or silent woodland, where, a few short hours,
I might lie down to breathe awhile in peace!

Two years! can I bear up so long? each day
The oft-asked question I again repeat—
This misery will it ever, ever end?
Will the day come when this contentious crowd,
Which strive together here, will part for ever?

Yes! though the gathering cloud of gloom is dark,
And hangs around us like the pall of night,
Still through its depths I see a shining star;—
My fair one waits me in a distant home,
Her smile with bravery fills my sinking soul:
And to myself I answer, "Lo the day
Which *shall* come *will* come; though it seems to be
Advancing with a slow and tardy step,
'It will not tarry;' every moment brings
A moment nearer the eventful hour
When we shall issue from this dungeon free."

Oh glorious hour ! at thought of thee my heart
Quickens with joy. I seem to rise so high
That Difficulty's frowning ridges, thrown
Athwart my way, appear so many straws,
While far beyond the prospect opens out
In sunlit landscapes, brightening every hour.
The patient, languishing upon his bed,
Refuses not the bitter draught, his mind
Dwelling on blessings it is meant to bring ;
The warrior passes on where thick around
Falls iron hail, and ruddy lightnings flash
Right in his face, and battle-thunders roar—
He quails not, but through smoke-wreaths dark espies
The glory which awaits his glad return ;
The traveller, whether roaming pathless wilds,
Or tossing on the ocean's restless wave,
Shrinks not from hardships which beset his way,
But cheers his darkest days and loneliest hours
With thoughts of future rest in peace at home :
Shall I then murmur at my lot, because
A few things might be smoother. I'll repine
No more ; but count these ills as blessings sent
To render still more sensible the change,
When that blest time arrives which sees me pass
Out at yon gates to enter in no more.

How great will be the contrast ! then, instead
Of frowning looks from eyes that wildly glare
With wicked light, I all day long shall bask
In dear Selina's gentle loving smiles.

Instead of blows and bruises, I shall feel
Tender caresses from my fair one's hand ;
Instead of malice, daily issuing forth
From men which seem transformed to engines, used
By Satan to pump up the dregs of Hell,—
Thenceforth for evermore I shall partake
Her winsome looks, her soft bewitching smiles—
Pure draughts of love. Love always sweetens life,
But then, when this dark storm is overpast,
And love's sweet influence beams on me, from her,
My most adored, how great will be the bliss !
Cease then, my heart, repine not, but rejoice,
For time still brings thee nearer to thy joy.

INTERLUDE.

Courage, brave heart ! those weary days of grief
Each bring thee nearer to the glorious close,
When thou shalt find a sure and full relief,
And on that loved and loving breast repose.

No memory then of all the storms blown o'er
Shall ever on thy happiness intrude ;
These thy tormentors thou shalt see no more,
Who daily grieve thee with their acts so rude.

But gentle words of love shall fill with joy
Thine inmost core ; quite safe beyond the sound
Of hell-born strife, it shall no more annoy
Where *her* fair presence sheds its influence round.

XIV.—EMANCIPATION.

AND it is finished! Every wave and storm
Of that tempestuous sea is safely passed;
And here I stand alone, and breathe the air
Of freedom, while the mellow sunbeams smile
Around me, now a hundred miles beyond
The jarring discords of that home of strife.
Softly the tepid zephyrs fan my cheek,
Worn thin by care. Beneath the morning sun
The slumbering ocean smiles as infant lips
Ripple when pleasant dreams attend their sleep.

Thou changeful emblem of the life of man,
Since last I stood upon thy sounding shore
Unnumbered storms have swept across thy breast,
And roused thee up in anger, roaring loud
And foaming white with rage, unnumbered wrecks
Have sunk into thy oozy caverns deep;
But now thou art at peace, no trace is left
To mark thee as the battle-field of storms.
Deep in thy tangled maze of seaweed groves,
Peaceful and calm the sleeping mariners rest,
And sunny ripples play like lovers' smiles
Where late they struggled hard with watery death.
Like thee, my heart has felt the furious blasts
Of countless ills, now causing thought to rise
Into a gush of bravery like thy waves,
Now sinking it in depths of dark despair

Like the deep trough betwixt each rolling sea,
And often nearly wrecking me, but now
I find myself safe anchored in a bay,
Where not a ripple breaks the pleasing calm.

That jarring bell, when breaks the unwelcome day,
May startle others from their morning dreams ;
Its harsh vibrations sound no more for me.
Those howling fiends, like angry wild beasts caged,
May roam around their Bedlam's confines still,
Mutually murdering one another's peace :
I now am but a spectator, and view
The strife in which I was a sufferer once,
And feel myself quite safe without the bars.

Nor doth my heart exult alone to know
That I am free again, but more to find
That I have come off conqueror in the fight ;
That, having weathered persecution's storm
Through to the end, a meet and fit reward
My efforts crown. Down in this seaside vale
I've won a goodly home, a home which she
Whom I have loved and laboured for so long
Might share with me, and find herself a step
Above her former level. How my heart
Beats with delight to know the day is near,
When I shall call that angel-form my own,
And dwell with her, and never leave her more.

I wish that business had not hindered me

From paying her a visit now, to tell
The treasures I have won, and lay them down
Like victory's laurels at her sacred feet.
But here I come in haste to reap for her
Advantages still greater. So I'll place
My thoughts in keeping of a snowy sheet ;
To-morrow it will reach her ere the sun
Is high in heaven. Meanwhile, glad heart, rejoice
In thy escape from fellowship of fiends,
To be companion for an angel soon.

INTERLUDE.

Escaped !
From dreary prison once again set free !
Escaped !
I stand alone beside the rippling sea ;
And sunny rays of light
Seem to rejoice with me.

Escaped !
Not for a few short hours as heretofore.
Escaped !
Escaped completely, to return no more ;
And Nature joys to hail
My steps on Freedom's shore.

My love,
Would that thou hadst been here my bliss to share.
My love,

But here I hasten for thee to prepare
A nest, all meet for one
So beautiful, so fair ;

A nest
Where we may dwell through many a happy year ;
A nest
Where to each other we shall grow more dear,
Nor shall the flight of years
Behold our love grow sear.

XV.—THE EPISTLE.

THESE sentences I write, not to make known
My love for thee ; thou dost already know
The secret longings of this passionate heart.
If thou wilt search thy memory, and look back
To that sweet summer night, long, long ago,
When, 'mid the flowers and trees and fragrant air,
We stood, delighted both ; but both drank in
A rapture far more thrilling from each other—
When I the secret whispered in thine ear—
Thou wilt perhaps remember what I said.
I loved thee then far more than aught besides,
And deemed my passion could not even admit
Of growth, such was its stature and its strength !

But it *has* grown, and grows—has led me on
Through hidden danger and through open strife,
And given me strength and courage to contend
With every foe along the perilous road,
And kept me safe, from all disaster free,
And given me things worth offering, and destroyed
The fear I once had that our union might
Transplant thy happiness to perilous ground.
And now, whatever I am and all that fortune
May chance to make me in the years to come,
I offer thee, and ask thee to be mine.

Long years have passed since I beheld thee first,
And loved and coveted, and then resolved
To rest no more till worthy of thy smile.
Thy beauteous image, ever in mine eye,
Has led me on and on, from veriest depths
Of poverty, still upwards, till I now
Have gained a home and prospects meet for thee—
A lovely home, beside the sea-waves blue,
In a low winding dale, whence opening buds
And blooming roses breathe their rich perfume
O'er sunny waters, rippling starry bright,—
A home thy lovely presence would complete,
Would turn for me this earth to glorious heaven.

Believe me, if thou wilt, no happiness
Exists for woman separate from love :
Her bliss is influenced by affection's strength
In him to whom she yields herself. On earth

There is not found who loves as I do thee.
I often think the Cabinet of Heaven,
Which takes an interest in the affairs of men,
And sends down love to cheer us, never would stain
Its sacred councils with an act so cruel
As to allow another heart to feel
Towards thee as I do. That would rob *one* heart
Of all that makes it worth our while to live.

No ! confident I feel that He who made
Us both has meant and formed us for each other,
For wisest ends—each other's happiness ;
Or He would never have led me to thy side
And given me sensibility to see
In thy sweet form, in thy complexion fair,
The very gem of all His vast creation—
The master-piece of His unnumbered works.

I seem to see, as with prophetic eye,
The sunny future that awaits us both,
Extending out beyond the reach of sight
In fair perspective, whose receding plain
Is dotted o'er with lovely images
Of happiness, most exquisitely drawn ;—
I see our rambles by the fair blue sea,
Where breakers whiten on fantastic rocks,
And high on sun-gilt cliffs the sea-fowl build ;—
I see our walks in thick flower-scented woods,
Where birds, already paired, construct their nests,
We looking on with envious eyes no more ;—

I see, more fair than all the rest, thy smiles
Of happiness monopolised by me
In the fair nest I have for thee prepared !

I wait for thy reply, nor keep me long ;
If thou dost care to bless me, forward soon
Proof palpable and demonstration clear
That I am near Elysium's confines come.
I see no obstacle betwixt us now
Like that which warred against our union once ;
Hence I advise we do not waste the time,
But give the attraction of each other's arms
Its swift and natural course. As grains of steel
Within the magnet's unobstructed range,
So let us come together. We are drawn
By love's strong sympathy ; so let us haste
Unto each other's bosom and be blest.

INTERLUDE.

Thou art earth's sweetest flower,
Creation's fairest rose ;
In Heaven's most glorious bower
None lovelier doth repose.

Yet, dwelling in the vale
Where earthly storm-winds roar,
Thou needest, from the gale,
Shelter, till it blows o'er.

That shelter I have found ;
 Come, then, and dwell with me,
 Where white waves ever sound
 The chorus of the sea.

There passing years, which roll
 In their long flight, shall prove
 How thou, upon my soul,
 Hast fixed the stamp of love.

PART II.

Despair.

I.—THE DEATH-WOUND OF HOPE.

HIDE, hide ye clouds ! Within your gloomiest folds
Of mist conceal me. From the farthest verge
Of heaven's circumference call your gloomy ranks
Together. In tenfold obscurity
Bury me deep. No more shut out the sun
From others, cast your shadows all on me.
Thick darkness, wait not till the sun go down,
Come forth this moment from thy gloomy caves,
And in thy sable mantle wrap me round ;
Nor let the light discover me again
Henceforth for ever. Lo, a brighter sun
Than yon in heaven has ceased on me to shine !

This letter scarcely weighs a dram : the words
It has conveyed have turned the heart within
My breast to lead. My spirits, which of late
Danced airily upon the wind, now droop
And weigh enough to drag me through earth's crust

To central depths, where constant darkness dwells.
But be it so, since in those hidden caves
Illusive day will never more deceive,
Nor the fair face of woman. Yet I feel
The fault was not in her. The hell-born tongue
Of envy, in its craft and subtlety
Assumed an angel-dialect, and worked
My fall—robbed me of my undoubted right,
My double right, as patrimony of heaven
And due reward of weary years of toil.

Wounds ! how terrific to the thought of man !
The severed muscle, membrane pierced, torn limb,—
From the whole system's confines banish peace.
Mine is a spirit wound—a wound from her
Whose place it was to soothe my every sore,
And chase away my sorrow with her smiles,—
A wound which time and medicine may not heal ;
For it is irritated constantly
By restless jaws, by that remorseless worm,
Which ceases not to gnaw mine inmost core,
Nor will until the welcome hand of Death
Presents me his oblivious draught, and steep
My being wholly in forgetfulness.

And is there then a remedy ? can Death
Relieve me ? Then I'll call him to mine aid,
And hide for ever in his still dark shades.
This razor's edge is sharp, its blade is bright
And smooth—a proper instrument to set

The crimson stream from hidden channels free.
Oh, precious instrument ! thou canst unlock
The gate which leadeth to the realms of peace
And rest, in death's calm, never-waking sleep !

Thou shalt ! a few more moments sees me laid
Upon these cold hard stones, as easy there
As ever I have slept on beds of down.
Though round me copious streams of blood may
pour—

A ghastly, sickening sight for other eyes,
My visual orbs shall not behold, my nerves
Benumbed, completely chloroformed by death,
Shall bear their testimony no more of things
Which me no more concern. This ticking clock
Will strike its bell at regular intervals
Of time ; but *I* shall count the passing hours,
Chiding their lingering, leading pace, no more ;
For, ere that doleful sound again recurs,
I shall be quite as far removed from all
Those troubles, which have wrecked a fruitless life,
As if a thousand thousand centuries
Had rolled their long dark ages to a close.
I am a blasted ear upon a stalk :
Last hour, fast ripening into golden grain,
The lightning struck me, withered every hope
Of love and happiness and future peace,
Then let me swiftly and without regret
Root myself up and cumber earth no more,
But leave it clear for happier plants than me.

And terror-stricken faces soon will bend
Above me, and perchance will curse this hand
Which will have made my peace. Perchance behind
The church, where, when the moon shines, shadows
dark

Present to fancy's eye the images
Of gliding ghosts, they will deposit me.
Kindred and friends perchance will gather round
To shed a parting tear, and bid adieu
To him nor grief nor pity can restore.
It may be she, that angel, who once smiled
On me, and made me think this doleful world
A paradise of beauty and of pleasure,
Hearing, will be convinced that all my vows
Were in pure love conceived, and full of truth ;
And soften into pity, yea even melt
Into deep sorrow, not to be consoled
By words of kindness. It may be this act
Will wring her heart, will torture it, when I
Can come no more to wipe away her tears,
Or take the heavy burden from her heart.

Here is a point which pricks my bleeding soul
With sharper pain than ever. I have lived
Long years of toil and sorrow, that I might
Make her more happy : shall I in one act
Wed all her future years to misery—
Spread clouds across her heaven, from which the sun
Will break no more ? bequeath a legacy
Of never-ceasing pain to that dear soul

Whose native element is happiness—
In love's perpetual sunshine formed to dwell.

It must not be! No! no! I'll sooner bear
The gnawing of the restless worm of grief,
Which tenants now the palace of my heart
She once was wont to fill, till it has eat
My very life away by slow degrees,
Than such a bitter cup prepare for her
Whom I have loved so tenderly, so long.

Roll, trickling tears! Roll swiftly down my cheeks,
Cool the fierce fire which burns my feverish brain,
Well up in briny streams from gushing springs
Fresh opened in my heart—my heart the abode
Of sorrow now. I've but one pleasure left,
That is, by offering sorrow there a home
I keep its presence from her door away,—
Be this my consolation. Welcome, then,
My future guest, make in my heart a well
For ever to supply the fount of tears.

INTERLUDE.

Dark, dark, dark,
Is the cloud of sorrow which now puts out my sun;
Dark, dark, dark,
Night's shadows fall ere half my day is done :
And the poisonous air of death blows by,
And no dim star blinks in the ebon sky.

Dark, dark, dark,
Is the road which I now must travel uncheered, alone,
Dark, dark, dark,
For infernal Envy's breath has prevailed, and blown
Love's lamp out, which lately shone so bright
That mine eyes are blind to all other light.

Dark, dark, dark,
But if I must never behold those eyes I love,
Dark, dark, dark,
Remain, O ye stars, and bright sun, and fair heaven
above ;
Yea, let thought and knowledge and memory die,
Then my heart shall rest from its misery !

II.—A NEW DISCOVERY.

THE purple draught runs warm and comforting
Down to my heart ; fills it with joy and song,
Where sighs and weeping lately reigned supreme ;
Pumps merry laughter from the well of tears,
And drowns in sweet oblivion all my woe,—
A mirth-inspiring luxury, which, till now,
I never durst indulge in. Working hard
Day after day, I every fraction saved
For that unworthy object, who was then
Deceiving me,—who cast me off at last,

Filled with despair to find myself thus mocked,
And all the fruit, which I had carefully
Gathered for her, untasted, spurned, despised.
But now I am not under love's restraint,
And, fearless, can indulge what pleases me,
And view with pity and contempt the slaves
To love's vile magic and capricious smiles.

Fill up my glass ! The man is aught but wise
Who on a woman's selfish smiles depends ;
Yet lacking thus in wisdom once was I.
For years I nearly pined myself away
With love and longing, ever promising
Myself the pleasure that I never found.
But now the spell is broke, the charm dissolved,
Which held me. Now I know that I have walked
Enchanted ground, and found the key which opes
The door that leads to pleasure's palaces.
How my head swims with mirth. A song unthought
Rises in notes spontaneous to my lips.

Fill up my glass again ! The god of wine
Is bearing me upon his pinions light.
Even sitting here I seem to float away
O'er land and ocean—dashed with beauty's hues
Each opening prospect. Now and then mine eye
Rests on Selina. Ah ! thou lovely form
Of treachery ! Cupid now may shoot for thee
His darts ; but I have soaked my heart in wine,
Which quickly heals his oft-inflicted wounds ;

Have, in a pool of spirits, petrified
That tender ball of flesh, by nature apt
Impressions to receive, which afterwards
Must be repented of with sighs and tears.
I loved thee, but I love thee now no more,
Nor hate thee, nor even deem thee worth my care,
For I have found a charm surpassing thee.

Fill me another glass ! I cannot keep
These eyelids open, for the god of sleep
And that of wine go hand in hand together.
The former entertains his guests with mirth,
Then turns them gently over to the rule
Of his oblivious partner, but the touch
Of Bacchus or of Sleep are welcome both ;
They rescue me awhile from sorrow's grasp,
And steal me from my sad, sad self away—
Transform me to a happier being, free
From sorrowful remembrance of my woe.

INTERLUDE.

Some are well pleased if in the court
Of Hymen they the man be ;
But give to me heart-soothing wine,
Or soul-inspiring brandy.
Dark wine or sparkling brandy ;
There is a really handy
Method to chase our cares away ;
'Tis simply—drinking brandy.

Ambitious men are grieved if they
Are not more than they can be ;
But all vexation disappears
When they have sipped the brandy.
Dark wine, &c.

The soldier on the battle-morn
Swills down the liquor, and he
Fears not to face th' opposing troops,
When cheered by wine or brandy.
Dark wine, &c.

The sailor on the sinking ship
Fears he will never land see ;
But cares not if he never do
When he has drunk the brandy.
Dark wine, &c.

The jilted lover quite forgets
His fair when on the randy ;
No man is ruled by petticoats
When cheered by sparkling brandy !
Dark wine, &c.

III.—WRETCHEDNESS.

How my head burns ! The sun is sinking down
The western side of heaven, and I have slept
Till now ! My blood is like a stream of fire,

Which circulates with pain through every limb !
My burning breath scorches my dry, parched lips,
And a weak tremor seizes all my frame !

I'll rise and dress. How ghastly pale my face !
I must not venture forth abroad to-day,
Or my appearance will confirm the truth
Of what they will suspect. But I must strive
Our midnight revel from them to conceal.

The soft May-breezes, laden with perfume,
Enter my open window, sweep my brow,
Ruffle my hair, as though in pleasant mood
They would caress me as in days of yore.
I thank them not, for they but rouse again
Sad memory's records from their quiet sleep.
I've lost the love I valued more than all
Fair objects in the universe besides.
The universe itself, with amorous sighs,
May stoop, and lavish every fond caress,
Yet not console me, nor even take a grain
From the sad burden of my soul's distress.

How tardily the lagging hours creep on !
How still and dreary is the scene around !
Though Nature fain would smile, with Spring her guest,
She seems to wear a sad, distracted look—
A look of joy and sorrow, strangely mixed,
But having no affinity for joy :
I but absorb the dregs of sorrow now.

Sweet instrument, with thy melodious tones,
Chase sorrow hence! 'Twas in the days when hope
Was my companion, that, by dint of long,
Laborious practice, I acquired the skill
To call these rich, melodious strains from thee.
I knew she loved thy music, and prepared
A choice selection of those plaintive songs
She most admires, for her express delight.
Yea, oft in dingy college-hall at night,
Alone, I've swept with diligent hand the keys,
While empty echoes rang along the rooms,
And wailing winds sighed like the trail of ghosts;
Nor ceased till the cathedral clock struck twelve,
My only object being to acquire
Accomplishments that might my fair one please.

That object, too, was crowned with much success.
Love gave me almost superhuman strength
The necessary labour to endure,
And thus it was I gained unusual skill.
Even now, when I wake up these symphonies,
The mice creep from their holes, and squeak around,
While from their bright, black eyes moist tears distil.
The spiders from their hidden watch-holes run,
Uncalled by buzz of struggling, captured flies,
And dance in time upon their trembling webs,
While ever and anon, without, I hear
The race canine in plaintive chorus wail.

Ah me! are these my only auditors?

Must this rich feast of gentle flowing sound,
Prepared by labour so immense, through years
Of care, expressly for my fair one's ear,
By her be never heard ; but only serve
To give delight—to dogs and vermin vile ?

I cannot bear the thought. I'll shut thee up,
Sweet instrument, and quickly haste away,
And quench my flame in Bacchus' purple streams,
And bathe the wounds of this poor bleeding heart.
Soon, from my feelings, which, like chafing fiends,
Torment me, I find refuge in his realms,
Where care departs, and blest oblivion reigns.

INTERLUDE.

When music loses all its charm
For those whom love has ceased to cheer ;
When fairest scenes but call to mind
Sad thoughts of things which once were dear ;

When base ingratitude has froze
The warm affections of the heart ;
When love, despised, bids every soft
Emotion from the soul depart ;

Still, in the cheering streams which flow
From sparkling bottles, bright and clear,
Oblivion of each woe we find—
Freedom from cares and sorrows drear—

A cheering draught, whence young and old
Relief from their distress may find.
Then ye who feel Misfortune's rod,
Drink, and cast sorrow to the wind.

IV.—DEEPER STILL.

WEARY and wearier ! How my limbs and joints,
By labour overtaxed, ache day and night !
How the red dust, which penetrates these rags,
Tickles the tender surface of my skin ;
And then, when dismal hours of weary toil
Have brought at last their long-expected close,
I take my way, mid clouds of stifling smoke,
By heaps of slag and mounds of ashes, whence
Sulphurous vapours taint the darkened air,
To seek repose upon a fulsome bed.
My fellows, rough and dirty as their trade,
Show no civility or due respect
For others' feelings ; in their common talk
Unwittingly they wound my tender heart.

Could I have thought or dreamed in bygone years,
When I was once inspired by passionate love,
And by that inspiration raised myself
Higher and higher, that that heavenly flame
Would stir me up at last against myself,
Cause me to storm the fabric of my life,

Built with such care, to smash its glorious dome,
And cast it down into the very dust,
Far lower than the level whence I rose !

'Tis done ! My glorious triumphs all are past.
Naught now remains but years of toil and sweat,
Smothered with smoke, and choked with clouds of dust,
Riddling red grit by the vast flaming forge,
And to support a life involved in shame,
Spurned and avoided by the very men
Who once to me as a superior bowed.

It strikes me oft that if she could but see
These hands, which once caressed her shining curls—
These arms, which pressed her bosom to my heart,
Wounded and bruised and smeared with mire and dirt,
The sight would wake up pity in her soul.
But that must never be. I could not bear
That she should know the depths of dark despair,
The scenes of vice, the shame and bitter woe,
Which I was plunged in when she ceased to smile.

I have but one sad consolation left,
So deep my poverty, such my disgrace,—
That is, this heavy load of misery
Will one day be removed. A few short years
(My frame, unused to labour such as this,
Can bear no more) and I in perfect peace
Shall sleep, where waving grass grows thick and green,
With quiet, though cold-hearted bed-fellows,
Where morn unwelcome shall no more disturb.

INTERLUDE.

Dying, slowly dying !
Dying of love ! love unreturned by thee.
O couldst thou see thus lying,
Pining away in hopeless misery,
He whose heart's blood for asking thou couldst have,
Nor lend thine aid from sorrow's grasp to save !

Grief and despair are eating
My heart out, while even yet within by breast
It ceases not its beating,
Like that strange worm which cannot die nor rest.
And must I never be comforted by thee,
Who canst alone relieve my misery ?

Dying in hopeless sorrow !
Will thought, which thus torments me, ever die ?
Or each succeeding morrow
Dawn to behold me heave a deeper sigh ?
A sigh of true but unrequited love,
At which even angels weep in realms above !

But when my form is sleeping
Beneath the churchyard grass, thick, green, and deep,
Come when the stars are peeping—
My heart shall hear thee even in death's cold sleep ;
Plant Resignation's flower upon my tomb,
And I will cease to sigh when it shall bloom.

V.—DISTRACTION.

THE news I have received to-day is worse
Than mortal poison poured into the wounds
Misfortune has inflicted on my heart !
I've seen dark days, felt storms of evil burst
Full on my head ; but like a lightning blast
This news is to my bleeding, storm-riven soul.

Though grief pressed heavily upon me long,
I bore it patiently while she was pure,
And sometimes deemed that Heaven had kindly sent
Those difficulties in our way to give
Still more of joy to the triumphal hour,
Which, till to-day, I always deemed would come.
I never quite despaired, though it has looked
Like an impossibility of late—
She, unpolluted, Hope could never die.

And she, to-day, becomes another's bride !
Another's ? Dare she in the face of Heaven ?
Of Heaven who made us for each other, placed
A mutual sympathy within our breasts,
And made it one of the fixed laws of nature
That, absent from each other, we should be
Unhappy—breathe away our lives in sighs.
Will she, my promised, she with kisses sealed—
She whom the dark old wood beheld espoused—
Will she to-day yield up herself to him
She loves not, as the prostitute for gold ?

Will she, to-day, in adoration low,
With burning cheek before Shame's altar bend ?

It must not be. Earth, rouse and shake thyself !
Rend the firm ground asunder where they stand
Before the altar, open wide a gulf
Immense between them which they may not pass ;
Yea, sooner split in twain thy rounded clod,
Each half from th' other, ever shooting outwards
With lightning speed, than suffer this to be.

Ah ! I am but frail flesh. It is not mine
To call the giant world to be my slave.
If I had been a god, the universe
Should have been marshalled into war before
I would have suffered such a shame to be ;
But I am weak and mortal.

Ha ! I'll make
Mortality my refuge. Long ago
From these tormenting thoughts I had escaped,
Compassion for her feelings held me back ;
Even now I should regret to wound her heart,
But I must find some secret course, and plan
My scheme so artfully as to evade
Detection by eyes of meddling men.

That green old boat, which washed up from the sea—
Last relic of some storm-demolished ship—
Might serve my purpose well : it lies there still,

Without an owner, in the lonely creek.
I'll push it out a mile or two to sea
By night, and from its bottom draw the plug.
The circling waves will softly round me close,
And succour me to seaweed arbours calm,
Where mermaids dwell, beyond the reach of storms,
Whose war-notes howl discordant round the world.
Poor heart, thou dost despair of bliss alive ;
Despair no more, for thou shalt yet find peace.

INTERLUDE.

When sorrows overwhelm,
When souls by grief oppressed
Sink in despair, there still
Remains one certain rest,
Beyond th' illusive world
Of light and heat and breath,
In those dark realms assigned
To the still rule of death.

Though pain may rack each limb,
Though fierce disease may burn,
Though friends turn bitter foes,
And the loved fair one spurn,
Yet, at Death's magic touch,
The memory's records cease
To grieve, the forms of ill
Vanish, and all is peace.

VI.—THE EYES OF HEAVEN ;

OR,

A THOUGHT SUGGESTED BY THE STARS.

SECRETLY hidden by the pall of night,
Spread o'er dark cliff and shore and rippling sea,
I've got clear off ; and now, beyond the ken
Of coast-guards sauntering round the silent rocks,
I row my crazy boat less stealthily
Out to the open sea. Has Neptune hushed
His angry subjects, foaming waves and storms,
To peace and silence ? Has he bid them lay
Their noisy rage and gloomy terrors by,
And take me to his azure breast in peace ?

Long, dark, and stormy has my journey been,
O'er strange, unhospitable wilds, the light
Of *ignis fatuus* ever leading on,
With promises of rest and home and love,
Till suddenly it vanished, leaving me
Hemmed in by brambly wilds and quagmires deep.
Fair ocean, gentle ocean, I have come
To seek for peace in thy deep oozy realms !
Say, wilt thou aid me to escape away
From ills which press too heavily on my life ?

Ah ! thou art willing. I have but to yield
Myself to thy embrace, and be at rest,
Insensible to storms which cloud thy brow.

The sun will rise up rosy from thy brim,
His rays no more shall break my morning sleep,
And none will guess the choral sepulchre
Wherein at last my weary limbs repose.

But ere I close mine eyes, to wake no more,
I'll lean upon mine oar, and take my last
Parting survey of Nature's beauteous face.
Breathe, gentle night-breeze, on my fevered form,
Tune thy soft harp to murmurs faint and low ;
Henceforward I shall hear thee never more !
Glimmer, ye tiny ripples, silvery bright,
I shall not see you when you dance above
My pillow. Low'ring clouds of night, spread on
Your pall above my deep, transparent grave.
Green wavelets, splashing from each hollow cave
And jagged reef, along the ocean's edge,
Murmur your softest, saddest tones, and weave
Them all into one funeral dirge for me.
But when my head is gently laid at rest,
Let Nature's voice one general chorus wake,
And sound the news of victory round the world.

Thou slanderer base, whose words, like subtle fire,
Flashing from heaven, have, with a withering blight,
Fallen on my life, take my defiance now.
Me thou canst not pursue down to the realms
Upon whose silent confines here I stand.
Black whisperer, prompted by the fiends of hell,
Wouldst thou undo that unsuspecting soul ?

Wouldst thou make *her*, ere morning light appears,
A vile adulterer, like thyself? I feel
Love's spirit makes it known to me that Heaven
In His great council, ere the world was born,
Married our embryo souls. And thou, to-night,
Wouldst take possession of thy stolen bride!
And lead her up to an adulterous bed!
And drown her virtue in a sea of sin!
'Tis mine to rescue her yet stainless soul
From such a blight; my death emancipates
Her from all danger, our pre-contract breaks,
And leaves her free; but casts a heavier load
Of guilt on thee—makes thee my murderer.

The water, slowly rising in the boat,
Flowing through open corkhole, now begins
Gently to cool my fever-heated limbs.
Beneath the eye-brow of yon dusky cloud
Twin stars look down, like gentle pitying eyes;
Twinkling I see them bend their gaze on me,
Holy as spirits lodged in yon blue dome,
And as the sparkling morning dew-drops pure;
And look they also on that cursed home,
Where still the marriage guests sit round their wine?
They do, for sea and shore, wood, hill, and plain,
Far off and near, are all within their range,
Half round the globe's immense circumference,
Bright emblem of the All-seer.

Ah! doth He,
That great First Cause, look on me now, and view

What I do here. He doth, for naught is hid
From His keen eye. And do I think to fly
What He permits? Call loud on Death to take
Me ere my time to his uncertain shade?
How know I that I shall not be transformed
Into a nature far more sensitive,
Beset with ills which man could ne'er conceive?

Let me make haste, while yet 'tis not too late,
To stop the hole through which the watery tide
Is flowing fast, and bale it out again,
And use this rotten boat I thought to make
An instrument of death, to rescue me
From many waters yawning for my soul.
It was the burning fever in my brain
Which half deprived me of the power of thought.
Let me lave well my temples in the tide,
And cool the heat, whence steamed up vapours thick,
Through which my mind's eye could not well discern
The aspect of the circumstances round me.
A tremor and a creeping chill takes hold
Of all my frame when I perceive the death
I have escaped. Kind Heaven, if in Thy sight
I favour find in my most troubled hour,
If from self-murder Thou wouldst save, allow
That dark paroxysm to return no more.
Preserve me till the time arrives when Thou
Wilt take me from this dreary vale of tears
To that congenial clime where love is blest.

INTERLUDE.

Thou glorious Power,
Whose eye even now looks on me out of Heaven,
As planets sparkling brightly through the even,
Aid me at this sad hour,
Though weak, yet strengthen with Thy mighty power.

Thou who didst form
My soul, who mad'st it for some glorious end,
Now broken and diseased, wilt thou not mend,
And safe from every storm
Keep the frail vessel which thou dost reform ?

Thou wilt ; I feel
The turning point has come,—to me, who roam
Dark wilds, away from Thee, from Heaven, from home ;
Thou dost Thy love reveal,
And I Thy precious guiding influence feel.

PART III.

Consolation.

I.—WORDS OF COMFORT.

“THOSE bitter woes, by which we all so oft
Are harassed, are in mercy sent from Heaven
To wean our hearts from earth, and give a zest
For more substantial joys of Paradise.”

Such were His words. And I have been a man
Of sorrows, and have murmured at my lot,
Deeming the glorious sun, which brightly rose
Upon my youthful years, gone down for ever.
And fearing a long journey in the dark,
By ways untrod, I made a rash attempt
To cut my future years off at a stroke,
And quench them in oblivion ; never dreamt
That I was treading on a rotten floor
Hiding the secret, unknown depths of hell.

His blessed words ! How they like music fell
Upon mine ear ! and as I listened still,

The glimmering light, which through the darkness
shone,
Grew brighter, till I plainly could perceive
A way which led right up, from depths obscure,
Where I was sinking, to the gate of Heaven.

And is there pleasure still reserved for me
Who long have ceased to hope? Yes, through the haze
Which hangs around me, I now clearly see
The prospect brighten, till, in sunny blaze,
Its vast perspective opens to my view,
And in the distance vanishes, not ends.
Mine eye is feeble—I can only see
A little way; that heavenly messenger
Declared distinctly that the beauteous realm
Before us has no limit, that the life
So freely offered us can never die;
And, more encouraging than all, the prize
Is sure to every one who works and strives.

Kind Heaven, give fortitude to bear my ills,
To welcome them, as medicine designed
To purge away the morbid thoughts which cause
This languor in my soul, to count each stroke
Dealt from Misfortune's rod correction meet,
In mercy from a loving Father's hand—
Meant only to secure my happiness;
To count the darkness and the troubles here
As kind expedients, more to mark the change
To that fair world of light and peace and love.

Leading through chequered scenes a wandering life,
And often striving in a flood of wine
To drown the sad remembrance of my woe,
How have I fallen from that happy state
Of innocence which was my portion once !
When, day by day, upon the heath-clad hill
My business was to tend the bleating flocks.
This degradation from position, won
By application joined to strength of mind,
Is small, compared with that enormous fall
From temperate habits into sottishness,
Brought on by disappointment in my aim ;
But now that Heaven vouchsafes a brighter hope—
A glorious hope which I had long forgot—
I must endeavour once again to brace
Myself, and strive with double energy
To gain the prize. And what encouragement
It is to know that if I rightly strive
No disappointment waits me in the end.

I will give up my wanderings, and return
To my far distant home. Though with disgrace
Loaded, and though my welcome may be cold,
Still it is better to submit awhile
To shame, that I may some time honoured be,
Than to go on from deep to deeper still,
Till, swallowed in Shame's ocean, I am lost.

INTERLUDE.

A wanderer long through ways unknown,
The paths of wickedness I trod ;
Heaven has at last my danger shown,
And turned my weary steps to God.

Covered with shame, I bow me down
Before His glorious throne on high ;
But dare I hope that He will own
So base a sin-worn wretch as I ?

So holy He, the heavens appear
Impure to His all-piercing sight,
And the heart's darkest depths are clear
To Him as if revealed by light.

Yet still I feel, through Him who shares
His throne, my sins are washed away ;
My soul is purer than the stars,
And sanctified my suffering clay.

II.—THE ROCKY HILL WHERE FIRST
WE MET.

THIS is the rocky hill where first we met,
And bright May-sunbeams call the star-like flowers
From the green bank on which I saw her stand,
Long years ago. Can it have been the print

Of those dear feet, so lightly passing o'er
The dark brown sod, caused it to germinate
And bring these blossoms forth, which year by
year,
Defying still the hand of time, will bloom
To mark for evermore the ground she trod.

Peace, erring heart ! thou dost forget thyself,
Thou hast adored that lovely form too long ;
Perchance by adoration, too, hast lost ;
For worship to no creature should be given,
Though fair as fairest angels. She was made
A meet and proper object for thy love,
But not to be or revered or adored.

By love for that fair object warmed, how oft
My mind was kindled to a vivid flame ;
Till by the new light issuing from myself
I spied in Nature tenfold loveliness,
And beauty seemed surpassing beautiful ;
I almost deemed that in creation's works
I should thenceforth discover nothing new.
Yet by the influence of His Spirit taught,
From whom both I and everything proceed,
I learn fresh lessons from each blade and flower—
His depths of skill, His never-failing love :
In everything a portion I behold
Of that great chain of wonder without end.
Even here on earth, we, who are embryos yet,
Learn from all beauteous objects, whether flowers,

Or still more fair, the form of her we love,
Some marvels of His all-creative power—
His master genius,—natures to produce
Susceptible of pleasure, and the means
To satisfy with unalloyed delight.

This world is but a place of preparation
For one more glorious. Shall I murmur then,
Because since last upon this hill I stood,
Gazing at yon far distant village spire—
With rapture dreaming of Selina's charms—
Dark disappointments have despoiled my heart
Of that fair object of its strong desire?
Nay, rather let me tune my harp to praise,
And turn my thoughts to that far distant land,
Where pleasures still await me, far more rich
Than that fair dream, had it been realised
In its full sweetness, ever could have brought.

These thoughts add light to sunshine, cheer my
way
Through dark misfortune's clouds of thickest gloom;
By pain arising out of love misplaced
We learn to love the truly excellent,
And give the erring heart to better things,—
To love the Prince of Lovers,—He who came
From Heaven to seek us, left His high abode,
Submitting to reproach, disgrace, and shame,
Still wooing human hearts to turn and love Him,
And, loving, be to jewels all transformed.

In future days, thou current of my soul,
Howe'er thy lesser streams may twist and turn,
May thy full flow ne'er cease its set to Him.
In Him I sweetest consolation find,
And even rejoice that I have known distress ;
Yea, if the pleasures of my earlier days
Could in their pristine sweetness be regained,
Their fairest light would be far, far outshone
By that which now illumines mine inmost soul.

INTERLUDE.

A few more swiftly rolling years
Will witness me set free
From all the ills which cloud this dark
Sad vale of misery.

The disappointments and the pains,
Which are my bitter lot,
The labour and the weariness
Will be in death forgot.

And I in that fair home above
Shall find eternal rest ;
Where sorrow is a word unknown,
And they who love are blest.

III.—BRIGHTENING HUES AND PROSPECTS.

How softly fall those gleams of sunny light
On the green landscape, yet in summer's prime,
Stealing through patches of dispersing cloud.
Black storms and dribbling showers of rain and sleet,
Borne on the chilly wings of northern winds,
Have kept the vernal blossoms back ; but now
All nature to the golden touch responds—
Smiles, as some child which cried itself to sleep
Awakes again all bright with dimpling joy :
Apt emblem of my life, on which the beams
Of fortune light again, though adverse storms
Of blighting passion nipped its earlier bloom.

'Tis strange that man should set his heart on gold,
And sigh for riches which may pass away,
As did from me the fruits of years of toil,
Saved up with care for an auspicious hour.
My heart now moves with gratitude to Him
Who sees, with piercing eye, through future days,
For guiding me to store a sterling stock
Of useful knowledge, which still renders me,
Though lately come forth from the filthy dens
Of drunkenness, a useful member still
Of His vast family,—has made my head
A mine of wealth, whence I at pleasure draw
Whatever I require. The discipline
Severe which I have murmured at has given

Such strength and resolution to my will,
That evil practices I once indulged
Retain dominion over me no more.

Nor only so, but after I had made
The first-fruits of His gifts a sacrifice
To Satan, on the altar offered up
Where Bacchus acts as priest;—when He perceived
My steady resolution to reform,
He moved the hearts of men to give me back
Whatever credit I before had lost,
And put me in possession of a home
Superior far to that I owned before.

One thing alone I could have wished for more
Than what I now possess—that she by whom
My heart was taught to love could have been here,
To share my joy and lean upon my breast.
Selina, dear, another's treasure now!
Another arm clasps round thee, other hands
Than these clasp thine; yet I will murmur not,
Since He who made thee has become my friend;
And if He deem me worthy to receive
Such treasure, doubtless will exert the skill
In His fair works so marvellously displayed,
And bring to me some maid as well adapted
To my peculiar taste, as Adam found
His Eve was, or as I have fancied thee.

INTERLUDE.

The mellow sunbeams fall
On the green fields and far receding land ;
By their warm influence all
The stalks shoot up and emerald buds expand.

So when the rays of love
From the great Sun of spirits warm the soul,
Thoughts which He doth approve
Spring up, and all our conduct soon control.

Then Thou, the central star,
Cease never more within my heart to shine,
Till Death the gates unbar
Which lead to fair Affection's home divine.

IV.—THE DREAM OF HEAVEN.

FAIR land of dreams ! Delightful country, filled
With loveliest unrealities ! My heart
Quickens its beating when I turn my thoughts
To all the wondrous beauty I beheld
When last my fancy visited thy realms.

But though unreal as mountains built of mist,
Castles of clouds, or eye-formed phantoms are,
May we not deem them sketches drawn in heaven,

By angel-artists, only to be seen
By spirit-eyes, and shown to us in sleep ;
Perchance with kind intent to keep us back
From purposed evil, to restrain our wills
From others' hurt and damage to ourselves ;
Perchance to turn our wandering thoughts, which stray
O'er earth's waste howling wilderness, to heaven.

The last faint gleams of evening's purpling rays
Had slowly faded into shades of night,
When silence gently lulled my weary frame
To sweet oblivion of surrounding things,
And left my soul to its excursions free.
I recollect no journey,—how I passed
The enormous space dividing earth from heaven
To me must still remain a mystery.
Yet I was there, in the metropolis—
The capital of God's vast universe,
Harmony's nursery, fair Beauty's home ;
There on mine ear what sounds melodious burst !
As far superior to the songs of earth
As they above the most discordant jar ;
And through the crystal atmosphere of heaven,
What matchless beauty, forms of elegance,
All tinted with new colours unconceived
By human thought, which the terrestrial prism
Reveals not to our sight, each moment flashed
On the astonished eye ! What glorious flowers,
What fragrant air, and what delicious fruit !
And, still more marvellous, the dwellers there

Had senses new and numberless (their natures
Unlike mankind with their imperfect five),
And every sense its own distinct desire—
For each desire a satisfying feast.

There, growing, was the tree whose vital fruit
So fortifies the principle of life
In those who eat of it, as to defy
Grim Death's most subtle methods of attack ;
And Pain and Sickness, his ambassadors
Severe in this our pilgrim world, excludes
From frames o'er which his tyrant rule is lost.
There was the river from which those who bathe
Come forth so clean that they can be soiled no more,
But walk in raiment white as clouds of light,
And shine for ever, lustrous as the sun.

On the green banks of that delightful stream,
And in the shadow of the tree of life,
Fair multitudes, whose spotless robes bespoke
Of their unblemished purity within,
Sang hymns of triumph. On the spicy breeze
Came stealing ever and anon the song
Of victory from fresh bands of colonists—
Victory o'er sin and Satan in the field
Of worldly strife. Some there I recognised,
Who when they sojourned in this vale of storms,
Bore deep the impressions of Care's wrinkling stamp
On forms decrepit ; and of whom, when bowed
Beneath Death's stroke, although their souls unseen

Had soared to Heaven, the earthly remnant lay,
A hideous picture frightful to behold ;
I recognised the same, but oh, how changed !
With comeliness, more sweet than woman's face
In youth's first blush, each radiant feature shone,
Pure meekness unto perfect beauty joined,
Like our ideal of angels bright in heaven.

But mid the glorious natures moving there,
One infinitely fairer than the rest
Attracted my attention. It was He—
The Prince of Love, the Emperor of Peace,
By whom creation's harmony at first
Was out of chaos brought ; by whom, when man
Had marred the glorious structure with a blot,
The filthy stain was wiped away with blood.
The sight of His majestic countenance,
Illumined with a rich benignant smile,
As far superior to Love's dimples here
As the great sun is to the rushlight dim,—
So grand, so noble, yet so mild and sweet,
Attracted my whole nature unto Him.
Delightful hour ! I could no longer give
Heed to the various wonders of His court ;—
Upon His glorious form mine eye was fixed
In one long raptured gaze. I felt and knew
That He, the author of gigantic worlds,
The artist who designed earth's fairest flowers,
The parent stream of thought, from whom proceeds
Action's first principle, life's fountain head,

Was present with me. I rejoiced to have
His own assurance that He is my friend,
Whilst in my love I still to Him prove true.

Henceforth for ever, O thou glorious King,
My best affections are concentrated
On Thee. Whatever else provokes my heart
To longing, satisfies the strong desires
Which Thou hast given me, I receive from Thee
With thankfulness. Whatever Thou dost withhold
I will forbear to sigh for, still content
With Thy unerring will to acquiesce :
My judgment I will ne'er oppose to Thine,
Nor call in question what Thou dost decree.

Fair world ! I could have wished my dream had
known

No end, but on thy glorious wonders, still
Gazing, I might have waked to earth no more,
To walk beneath the shadow of a cloud ;
But still I feel thy influence in my heart—
A gracious stamp, the true impress of Heaven,
On which I can with satisfaction look,
And cheerfully march on, and still increase
In faith and hope, as day by day I draw
Nearer my home—where One who loves awaits
My coming, with an endless feast of joy.

INTERLUDE.

City of beauty in the realms above !

Fair home for sinless souls by God prepared,
And fitted with such pleasures as shall prove,
For earthly toils, a full and just reward ;

How longs my soul to see thy glorious light,
To tune my harp upon thy glassy sea,
To tread thy gold-paved streets, so pure and bright,
And join thy matchless songs of victory !

To taste the fruit of those sweet fields, where flows
The water of that vivifying stream ;
On whose fair banks life's tree luxuriant grows,
In the bright sun of heaven's eternal beam !

City of beauty in the world above !

When shall I reach that home by God prepared,
When shall I taste its endless feast of love,
And find for all my toils a full reward ?—

When by Faith, Hope, and Charity I gain

The victory over sin and Satan here,
My soul, washed clean from every guilty stain,
Shall wing her flight to yon celestial sphere.

PART IV.

Triumph.

I.—A BUD FROM THE BURIED BULB.

'Tis strange that I should find my heart again
Entangled in the net of woman's love,
When I imagined it encased in mail,
Which never could be pierced by Cupid's darts.

I well remember how, in days gone by,
When, in its depths, Selina's girlish face
Was queen, her rule was undisputed there ;
And when she abdicated, I resolved
To lay the province Nature had designed
For woman's love to govern, waste for ever.
Yet now I find that resolution gone—
Shattered to atoms, like a dome of glass,
By that fair countenance of heavenly mould
My visual orbs have looked upon to-day.

I could not have believed the world contained
So grand a specimen of woman's form :

No pale-faced girl, no bud whose opening leaves
Have not been yet unfolded to the sun ;
A rose full-blown is she, endued with all
The grace and witchery of womanhood.
She looks as if the sunshine and the flowers
Of eight-and-twenty summers may have seen
Her ripening into beauty. When she smiles
I could forget the girl of sweet sixteen,
Which held my heart a prisoner once, enticed
Me from the heath-hills, sprinkled o'er with sheep,
Inspired me with the bravery requisite
To fight with giants standing in my path,
And force my way through the steep mountain pass,
Guarded by fiends and men by fiends inspired,—
I could forget, but that the glorious one,
Who has besieged my cold, unwilling heart,
And taken it by storm, has got a cast
Of countenance much similar to her
I loved of old, though a far nobler mien.
The one was lovely pale—a shrinking flower,
Like the lone snowdrop in the woodland vale ;
The other, queen of a choice garden, filled
With beauties gathered from each circling zone :
The one, a silent stream which slips along
Through woodland shades in places far away ;
The other, a bright river, in its flow
Gladdening the villas on its banks, beside
The sparkling town which hails the breezy sea :
The one retiring, loving solitude,
No wish, perhaps no power in crowds to shine ;

The other full of confidence, each word,
Each freely uttered sentence fraught with such
Unerring wisdom, wit original,
And happy issues of rich flowery thought,
That in her mind, no less than form, I find
A meet and proper object for my love.

And do I now again indulge the hope
Which I had long abandoned, that my home,
Where I have long a lonely hermit dwelt,
Will yet be warmed and cheered by woman's smiles—
That, bathing daily in a sea of love,
My grief-worn heart its sorrows will forget ?

INTERLUDE.

Sweet lady ! I am fain
To rest this head upon thy loving breast ;
Sweet lady ! years of pain
Would be forgot if I with thee were blest.

Thy dark eyes' witchery,
The smiles which play like sunbeams on thy face,
Thy dear heart's sympathy,
Should from my soul chase sorrow's every trace.

For I behold in thee
A guardian angel sent from heaven, to keep,
Solace, and comfort me,
And wipe sad tears from eyes long used to weep.

II.—HOPE'S RESURRECTION.

WONDER of wonders ! I can scarce believe
That she, who has reopened in my heart
The springs of love, is that same blessed soul
For whom at first those copious fountains flowed ;
And that, though long I mourned for her as lost,
As yet her hand is free. It now appears
A false report had somehow got afloat,
And one who pitied me, believing I
Should gain more comfort from the death of hope
Than nursing it diseased within my heart,
Sent me that letter, solely with a view
My mind from suspense to emancipate
And dreams not likely to be realised.

Dear heart, and have I seen her once again,
And knew her not, yet loved her ? I remarked,
When once or twice her eye was resting on me,
A knowing look, but soon again suppressed—
Discovering that she was not recognised.

I saw her, and I felt my heart drawn home
To her sweet bosom, thinking still it was
Another ; and, most sure, all-changing Time
Completely her fair image has transformed.
But ten long years since first I saw and loved,
Must have quite renovated all her frame,
So that now scarce an atom will be left
Of what I then beheld. It is the mind,

That beauteous cherub, habiting within,
Which shapes the earthly clay to glorious mould ;
The temper of the soul, or sour or sweet,
The stream of thought in its perpetual flow,
Kindly or ill-disposed, insensibly
Yet momentarily contributes to our cast
Of countenance, till it at last becomes
An index of the character within.

Selina ! dear Selina ! Thou most fair
Of all Earth's daughters ! when I look on thee
I almost dream I see an angel there.
Womanly gentleness must be enthroned
Within thy soul, and female tenderness,
And pity, and benevolence unfeigned.
Would it not grieve thee to behold me wretched ?
And does not this, my quenchless love for thee,
Plead well enough to cause thee to repent
Thy long-withheld consent to be my own ?

Kind Heaven, assist me. Thou perchance didst then
Withhold her from me for a time because
I loved her as a goddess, worshipped her,
And let her quite usurp my heart from Thee.
But as Thou wilt, since Thou didst create
Our hearts, dost rule their thoughts, and guide their
love,
And canst, at pleasure, all their fire suspend.

INTERLUDE.

Oh, beautiful must be the soul
Clad in so sweet a form ;
Through cares preserved, she smiled as flowers
Which have outlived the storm.

The storms of earth, the toil, the strife,
Their stamp have left not there ;
She still remains as beautiful
As Heaven's bright angels are.

Fairest of all—the gem, the rose,
The queen of breathing flowers ;
And would she wither on her stalk,
Unclaimed, in desert bowers ?

'Tis scarcely likely such should be
Her wish ; then to my side
Perchance I may transplant her now,
To be my own fair bride.

III.—TRUE LOVE IS AN IMMORTAL
FLOWER.

AND I have pressed her to my heart again—
Fairest of Beauty's daughters ! Gentlest soul
Of all that dwell within the homes of men !

And she has promised to be mine ! with me
To dwell, and be my comforter for ever !

'Twas a strange history which her blessed lips
Confessed,—strange truths I had suspected long.
It seems some one had carried her reports
Of actions, whose existence could be traced
But to the poisonous breath of envious tongues,
Which, to her inexperienced mind, appeared
A dangerous barrier to our wedded peace.
I now perceive that, while for her I toiled
Through long, hard college days, my name was made
The laughing-stock of village fools through spite.
Her very friends were carried by the tide,
Till she, at last, allowing them to be
Her judges, sought affection to suspend.

Sought ! But True Love is an immortal flower,
Which springs in triumph from its own dark grave.
She found it so, and day by day has sighed
For me, her absent one, till, like myself,
She has been nearly swallowed by despair.

Peace, grief-worn heart ! Brood not o'er troubles
past;
Henceforth I tune my harp to notes of joy,
Wild as the chorus of yon happy birds,
New paired, in vernal groves and woods, which now
Put on again their wedding-dress of green.
Delightful visitant, reviving spring,

Appearing at this fair, auspicious hour,
To new-born flow'rets extra freshness give,
Tint the gay larch-groves with a lovelier green,
With richer fragrance load the tepid air,
When the sun rises on that day of days,
Which brings me to the quintessence of bliss.

Nor shall my heart in its wild joy forget
To turn to Thee, my Patron Friend in Heaven—
Master of life, and propagator too—
To Thee in adoration low I bow,
For, first and last, the whole has been Thy deed.

INTERLUDE.

To my heart I have pressed her again—
My fair one, my first and my last;
And, as sunshine which breaks through the rain,
Her eyes chased the clouds of the past!

The song-birds new paired in the groves,
The wind, courting flow'ret and tree,
Rejoice to behold, at last, love
Renewed 'twixt Selina and me!

My fair one, the sun's lamp shall die,
As a taper which burns and expires;
No trace shall be left in the sky
Of its numberless twinkling fires;

But the fire of my heart shall still burn,
When each bright flaming heavenly wheel,
In the dark sky, has whirled its last turn,
Yea, as long as a spirit can feel !

IV.—VICTORY.

'Tis here at last, that long-expected hour,
To which mine eye has turned through weary years,
As from the storm-tossed ship the sailor's eye
To some far distant port, whose myriad lights
Twinkle above dark ocean's heaving brim—
'Tis here at last ! Though hard has been my fight,
Struggling with winds and waves and adverse tides,
Oft nearly foundering ; now it matters not,
But gives to triumph an additional joy.

Selina ! dear Selina ! of myself
Now part, let me enclasp this arm around
Thy precious form, and feel that thou, for whom
I long have sighed, art here in very truth,
From henceforth in my home to dwell for ever—
My home, where I have lived in loneliness,
No sound its silence breaking, save the squeak
Of mice in empty closets, or the sigh
Of sad winds sweeping through the casement bars,
Or that uncertain rustle gliding through
The door of empty rooms, when naught was seen,

By fancy formed into the walk of ghosts,—
My home, where I have lived beneath a cloud ;
But now thy radiant eyes shall be my light—
Brighter than sunbeams, purer than the stars,
And lovelier than those seen in fairest dreams.
The silvery music of thy gentle voice,
Like murmurs from an ever-running brook,
Shall be to me a constant spring of joy.

This slender form mine arm encircles now,
So light that I could bear it up with ease
And carry it, is more, far more to me
Than all the monstrous universe besides—
A germ of heavenly sweetness, from that home
Of beauty in the skies cast down to earth,
Where it has sprouted, from the elements
Drawn substance, mingled it with art divine,
Shaped it to all the elegance of heaven,
And tinted it with hues which far excel
All other specimens of virgin flowers !

Thou Prince of Genius, who hast given to man
This lovely earnest of Thy marv'ulous skill—
Woman, creation's fairest work and last—
To Thee I raise the joyous hymn of praise,
And call Thy fair creation's countless works
To swell the chorus of my marriage-song.

Ye cattle, grazing on a thousand hills,
Ye wild beasts, roaming round earth's surface green,

Ye plumaged fowls, which ride on liquid air,
Ye insects, spreading out star-spangled wings,
Ye finny tribes, in ocean's depths profound,
Ye creepers, in the blue sea's weed-hung caves,
All, all to whom the great command was given—
“Increase and multiply, and fill the earth;”
All, all in whom the wondrous sympathy,
Deep planted by the great Creator's hand,
Impels you still that mandate to obey,
Lift up your thousand voices, sing with joy
The praise of HIM who made us as we are.

Strange His inventions! wondrous are His ways!
Defying our research! planned for our good!
Designed to point us to those blest abodes
Prepared in heaven for those who do His will!
And though at times He seemed to cast between
Me and the goal of my most cherished hopes
Dark barriers, quite impossible to pass;
Though mine were shadowy paths, where I perceived
No ray of sunlight piercing through the gloom—
Though I had almost bid adieu to hope—
It was but my deficient sight deceived,
For, from above the shadows and the mists,
He stooped to lead me on, perchance by roads
Winding and circuitous, but still the best.
Then I will trust Him. All our appetites
Are His invention, and for each desire
He will the portion requisite prepare.

MARRIAGE-SONG.

Oh, fairest invention of God the Creator,
Sweet image of loveliness moulded in flesh,
Is woman, the finishing touch when glad Nature
Rose out of dark chaos, all beauteous and fresh!

Oh, wonderful earnest of thought's subtle feeling,
Which by countless ages may not be repressed,
Is first love on warm hearts still fresh in life stealing,
With strange unknown sympathy filling the breast.

Oh, a foretaste of Heaven, that city of pleasure,
Metropolis of the affections above,
I feel, now united to thee, mine own treasure,
Selina, my darling, my beauteous, my love!

!!

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